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BY GEORGE FITZMAURICE

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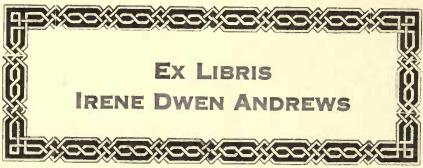
THE MOONLIGHTER

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

By GEORGE FITZMAURICE



MAUNSEL AND COMPANY, LTD.
DUBLIN AND LONDON · 1914

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CHARACTERS

PETER GUERIN.
ELLEN, *his wife.*
EUGENE, EILEEN } *their son and daughter.*
MALACHI CANTILLON, *brother to* ELLEN.
MORGAN DRISCOLL.
PEG, *his wife.*
TOM, MAURA } *their son and daughter.*
LUKE CARMODY.
BREEDA, *his daughter.*
BIG WILLIAM CANTILLON.

All of dairy-farming class.

SYNAN, *Captain of the Moonlighters.*
LUCY, COSDEE, QUIRKE } *Moonlighters.*
OTHER MOONLIGHTERS, NEIGHBOURS.

SCENE IS LAID IN KERRY.

The First and Second Acts occur on same day; the Third Act, next day; the Fourth Act, twelve months later.

Printed by R. & R. CLARK, LIMITED, *Edinburgh.*

ACT I

SCENE.—*Potato garden at gable-end of* PETER GUERIN'S *house. Enter from right (by wicket)* ELLEN *and* EILEEN.

ELLEN. No trace of Eugene in the garden, and his spade lying idle against the ditch! Whist! the horns are booming beyond in Carlevoye. 'Twas like the tip of a horn itself was peeping out of his pocket this morning the time he was washing his face into the skillet after he rising out of the bed. He started and reddened, and shoved whatever it was back in the pocket in a hurry when he seen me gaping at it. And if you seen the piercing look he gave me, his own mother, Eileen!

EILEEN. 'Tis surely blowing a horn he is gone to Widow Casey's eviction!

ELLEN. And Peter will hear of it, and Eugene, the darling of my heart, will be banged across the ocean. Eugene the only son left to me—Eugene that I wouldn't give the black of his nail for a hundred thousand children, if it was the will of God that I should give birth to such an almighty number! But now he'll surely have to march it, Eileen.

EILEEN. Let us be hoping, mother, it won't come to father's ears. If it does itself, it shouldn't make much pains for father if Eugene don't come to worse, for blowing a horn is no crime in the sight of God.

ELLEN. It's a crime in the sight of Peter, and that's my

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bother, girl. If he only coughed it's now nearly a crime in Peter's eyes, because Eugene do be praising the moonlighters and Peter black against them since the first day. Tim and Mike and Luke were banged, and, in the name of God! what mercy will he have on Eugene?

EILEEN. Sure, we must only keep praying that father will soften and that Eugene will come to the grace of God. All night I was praying for him, mother, all night and all day; and on Saturday evening didn't I go to the Holy Well and one "Our Father" and three "Hail Marys" I said for Eugene? And there is a hymn I have by heart I will sing to him what time he will be thinking of going out for that walk to-night. It might keep him in and prevent that fury rising in father over Eugene's night-walking.

ELLEN. Praying for him myself should be, but the words would stick in my gullet the way I am tormented from every abuse of the world, whirled about like an old bruised and battered tin-can. But 'tis for the crimes of more I am punished, Eileen, for it's nothing I ever done out of the way to deserve these stripes uncommon and severe, scarified all my days with troubles walloping at me as fierce as hail-stones flamming on the slate. But now the pinnacle of my miseries is reached at last in this grief about Eugene, and the heart and soul is kilt in me entirely.

[*Enter* PEG *from left.*

PEG. A greater trouble is on my heart about Tom. Forebodings I have of some doom coming to him and the times so cross. Forebodings I have, and tokens, and dreams.

ELLEN. Forebodings, Peg Driscoll! What signify is your forebodings and your tokens in comparison with my plain, proved, red-hot misery over Eugene? 'Tisn't Morgan Driscoll will bang his son like my queer man that was reared near a great house.

PEG. Forebodings I have, and tokens, and dreams.

ELLEN. Imagination, Peg Driscoll! 'Tis a little cross rises fumes in the brain of them that do be having too much ease and pleasure and joy for themselves. 'Tis no time I ever had for imaginations, my heart riddled and I rising up a young girl itself through means of the bad name that was on my people the Cantillons. And the time you were coogling and smiling with your man Morgan, 'tis Peter was prancing before me on the floor regretting he joined the grabbing Cantillons, the hot love having cooled in him less than three months after he leading me to the altar.

PEG. This blessed day, and I taking a mug of butter to Mage Heffernan, the woman I'm joined with, I seen a lone magpie on the branch of a tree.

ELLEN (*indignantly*). 'Tis you that is to be pitied surely with your magpies! Magpies! Two magpies I seen for luck last April twelvemonth, the day before 'twas rumoured my brother Big William was thinking of grabbing the Lucys' land, stirring up again with double the venom the bad feeling against the Cantillons—a new and special trouble sent to me for some purpose by the Lord God, glory, honour, and praise be to His holy name!

EILEEN. Sure, mother, you should be thankful to the good God, and he to bless Uncle Malachi's efforts at arguing Big William from the grabbing in the space of eleven days!

ELLEN. Don't be talking, girl; if there was meaning in magpies it's one I'd have perched on the half-door every hour of the day for the last forty years. Too presumptuous you are, Peg Driscoll, and to be skeeting your eye at that magpie as the signal token of Tom's coming doom—too big a thought you have of your son entirely! Indeed, it's no lone magpie I ever remarked when Mike and Tom and Luke left me, and it's no lone magpie appeared to warn me or my

brother Malachi of the greatest tragedy ever came to us, Eugene's rising against his father.

PEG. When I was returning from Mary Quirke's I seen that same magpie dismal and lonesome perched on that same tree.

ELLEN. The same magpie ?

PEG. The same magpie, for its forebodings I have, and tokens, and dreams. A night in March Tom and his father killed a white blackbird, torching. They plucked it and cooked it and licked it, Ellen Cantillon !

ELLEN. That was unlucky, but . . .

PEG. The next morning I seen a white snipe rising out of the rushes and I picking costerwaun on the verge of the slough. It let one fearful screech and up, up with it into the blue.

ELLEN. 'Twas strange surely, but if it was itself . . .

PEG. On May Eve the Good People were seen as thick as midges on our triangle field ; there was never such murder and music as was heard going on within the fort ; and every night since there do be a clatter going about our house in a lonesome hour of the night, the chaney having every rattle on the dresser, and you'd hear the pecks and pans tumbled upside down in the dairy and flammed up against the wall.

ELLEN (*indignantly*). It's listening to you I am—it's sympathising with you I am—and what you're after telling me no more sign of danger coming to Tom, no more than 'twould be danger coming to my Eugene, but your notions and your capers. Some neighbour that's carrying your butter, my good woman. Go to the Freemasons in Tralee, get the black books opened, and you'll soon know the culprit.

PEG. There is no decrease in my butter, and a peck or a pan don't be disturbed, nor a tint of the milk spilled in the morning after all the clatter during the night. Maybe you

heard tell of that brick that fell off our chimney last Friday week ?

ELLEN. Indeed, I did not, Peg Driscoll.

PEG. A botch of a mason Martin Deverix was inside, and out with him the door like a cracked man. He comes back in a while's time. " I have put a new brick in your chimney," said he, " and I have christened it New Ireland," said he, " and 'twill remain up in that chimney," said he, " as firm as the hobstone of hell," said he, " when you and me, Peg Driscoll, are in our graves." That mortal minute a ferl-wynd blew up from the river. It nearly rose the thatch off the house and made holy murder roaring in the chimney. While you'd be clapping your two hands together New Ireland was down to us in flitters on the hearth.

ELLEN. Oh, God help us, Peg Driscoll !

PEG. What do I be seeing in my dreams that do make me give fearsome screams that would wake the house ? What did I see last night when I woke up in the dead hour ? Rivers of blood I seen going past our door ; and it's my son Tom I seen hanging from the gallows, a pale dead corpse I seen him hanging, Ellen Cantillon, and I seen Eugene !

[*Going towards left.*

ELLEN (*following her*). You seen Eugene hanging on the gallows tree ! You seen Eugene hanging on the gallows tree !

PEG (*going out at left as* LUKE CARMODY *and* MALACHI CANTILLON *enter from same*). I seen Eugene . . .

LUKE. Take that paw from my sleeve, Malachi Cantillon ! Don't be striving to come paddy over me, old gombeen man ! Thank God, it's none of the poor things I am that's in your power and would go into an auger hole when they'd see you facing their cabins, a hump on you looking for your interest ! You'd belie me to Peter Guerin, you would, that's my good friend and neighbour, but from my own lips he'll hear a full

account as to why I refused to give my daughter Breeda to his son Eugene.

ELLEN. Surely, Malachi, 'tisn't matchmaking you went to Mr. Carmody here, and we having it settled to make the match between Maura Driscoll and Eugene ?

MALACHI (*to* ELLEN). Isn't it maddened I was after taking the account to Morgan Driscoll ! Well he knows his daughter Maura has the grah for Eugene, and if you seen the big smile that came on his face in spite of all he could do, for the man has no craft. Ah, it maddened me surely ! and the thought came (*to* LUKE) you might force Breeda to have Eugene instead of Tom Driscoll for the sake of the better land, you that likes to get full value for your cash, and you to earn it hard up to your neck in gripes and slush draining your old marsh of a farm since you were the size of a sod of turf.

LUKE. The devil's cure to you ! Till you came how happy I was at Breeda taking the notion of Tom Driscoll and she a changeable and contrairy girl. Twice the suitable match it seemed till you came tempting me with Peter's lovely farm. And that's what drew the insult from my lips about the time Peter held the rentwarnership, for 'twas striving to make little of your offer I was in my own mind and drive out the discontented thoughts you put into it with your tempting me.

MALACHI (*sardonically*). Ha-ha ! You'd be making yourself out as simple as Morgan Driscoll that does be singing love songs, his head in the sky and he walking the road. But it's more notions was in your head than striving to overcome temptation the time you screeched " rentwarner," alluding to Peter Guerin, and you to go to the door itself to screech it the second time to make sure the servant boy would hear you, and he out in the bawn. Showing off your nationality you were because Peter is against the moonlighters and there's that bad name on the Cantillons. 'Twouldn't do that

Eugene is turning national himself, because 'tis better schemes you have in view by joining the popular Driscolls.

LUKE. The temper made me say what I said, and don't be talking, you bitter old bad-minded thing! But if another little notion came to me itself the time I made the second screech, 'tis often a mean thought would rise in a man in a sudden and he'd be ashamed of it in the turn of a hand.

MALACHI. Little ashamed you'd be but for the fear I'd tell Peter, and it struck you maybe when you cooled that there wasn't too much to be gained by the screech after all. You're a humorous man, Luke Carmody—a solid man—a patriot for profit and a guardian of the poor!

LUKE. Well, Peter is coming, and we'll both tell our story. If I made a little slip, he has a heart to forgive. There is a heart in Peter Guerin and there is a heart in myself, thank God! 'Tisn't like you, old gombeen man, that has nothing but a gizzard in your chest, if you have that in it itself.

ELLEN (*going to* LUKE). For the love of God, Luke Carmody, don't have a word to Peter! There was never such murder, and the high opinion he has out of the Driscoll family. 'Tis unknown what the row wouldn't bring forth Eugene to hear of it—the Driscolls to hear of it—the match to be broke maybe; and surely you wouldn't do that harm in us and Eugene on the verge of exile?

MALACHI. 'Twould be his delight to break the match, and now I see his game, for 'tisn't wishing to him maybe the Driscolls should join the rentwarners and Cantillons, and Breeda marrying Tom. Isn't it great wisdom has come to you after your temper, Luke Carmody, but you aren't a match for Malachi Cantillon yet. If you say a word to Peter! . . .

LUKE. I will, and twenty.

MALACHI (*striding up to* LUKE). Listen to me, Luke

Carmody ! 'Twas never my method to be naming them that were in my debt, but 'tis yourself that's dragging it from me that your sister Cona owes me forty pound. That forty pound she'll pay me within a week and sell out the best cows in her bawn to pay it, if I hear a syllable from you either to Peter or the Driscolls of what passed between us to-day. Will you talk to Peter now ?

LUKE (*pausing, to* ELLEN). Didn't I say my bother from start to finish was whether Malachi would talk to Peter, Ellen Cantillon, and who could trust a gombeen man ?

ELLEN. In the name of God, Luke Carmody, get shut of that notion and let us be the friends we were ! Come to our house to-morrow and do your own matchmaking, while we'll be doing ours. 'Twill show us you aren't against us, and you'll know if Peter is turned against yourself.

LUKE (*pretending to hesitate*). I'll take your advice, my honest woman. (*Going towards left.*) But God forgive you, Malachi Cantillon, and as little pity you have for me and the way I am with Breeda. (*Facetiously.*) 'Tis to be hoped you won't have as much trouble with Peter—'tis to be hoped he won't be breaking that match without Luke Carmody putting him up to it. (*Swaggering out at left, his hands behind his back under his coat-tails.*) Well, good-evening to the pair of ye, and the grace of God !

ELLEN (*looking out right*). There is a terrible fury on Peter surely, the way his arms are going. (*Lugubriously.*) Sure 'tis myself was saying to Eileen, Eugene was as good as banged, and I'm thinking all your coaxing of Peter to let you go matchmaking for Eugene was but labour in vain, Malachi.

MALACHI. 'Twas not labour in vain. There isn't a thought in the heart of Peter unknown to me, you foolish woman. Obstinate as he is in points about principles and conduct, in the general way of acting according to custom no man is more

tender of what the people do be saying of him than Peter Guerin. That's how I coogled him into giving me leave to go matchmaking for Eugene, and I putting it in his eyes the people would think it queer to be keeping him single and he up to the age for marrying. If Eugene don't go to the devil entirely, Peter will be ashamed to balk us now, Ellen Cantillon.

ELLEN. How could I have better luck than to have him go to the devil entirely, Malachi? If he don't go now, won't he go after marrying and ruin himself and he independent?

MALACHI. Let what will come after. There is great power and taming in them few words the priest says over a man and another man's daughter. Be satisfied, 'tis our only way of chaining him now whatever, as my advice wasn't taken to put him into the Customs the time he was leaving school, and a good tack under Her Majesty able to suck nationality from the biggest rebel ever trod in two feet.

ELLEN. Is another misfortune coming to me to be blamed in the wrong? What say had I in his career and his contrairy father full master? But if I had itself how was I to have knowledge he'd turn outrageous national in the practical way?

MALACHI. 'Tisn't blaming you I am at all.

ELLEN. And indeed, Malachi, shrewd as you are, yourself was mistaken about Eugene, and he totally different from his brothers that would be silent statues on the hearth by us, and out with them through the bedroom window away on their marauding in the dead hour of the night. Isn't it often smiling to ourselves we'd be and whispering there was no harm in Eugene with his silly talk of the old times, his loud lamentations for the sorrows of Dark Rosaleen, and he up till dawn his two eyes stuck in a paper reading them fables of the battle of Landen and the battle of Fontenoy?

[*Enter* PETER GUERIN *hurriedly from right.*

PETER. Where is Eugene from the garden? Is it gone he is and reckless left a ridge unplanted?

ELLEN. Reddening his pipe he is somewhere in the shelter behind the ditch. (*Taking up basket.*) 'Tis the lovely seed I have here for him to finish the ridge, an eye in every skelp as sound as a bell, Peter Guerin. 'Tis a wonderful garden we'll have entirely, big green stalks up and covering the furrows before a neighbour in the parish, with the help of God!

PETER. The bay colt is absent from the inch whoever swept him. Ha! what sound is that to the west?

ELLEN (*catching* PETER *by arm*). Our garden won't shame us this season, Peter; 'tisn't like what happened the year that's gone through means of the faulty seed. (*Takes her hand inadvertently off* PETER, *turns and looks upwards.*) But what did I do on Eleanor Horan and Anne Faley to say our failure was the fruit of my bad cutting of the seed—what harm but I the finest warrant to quarter a potato in the ring of Ireland!

PETER (*who has rushed up garden and got on top of "ditch"*). I see him . . .!

ELLEN (*turning round in a panic*). You see him! Peter! Oh, God help us!

PETER. Look at him now on our bay colt, look at him and he blowing out of that thing like a pure savage! (*Comes off ditch.*) Didn't I know the badness was rising in him, though the two of you would be striving to make spir-spar of his praising the moonlighters and his roaming in the night. But can you deny it now, Malachi Cantillon, that he's on the road to become a picked blackguard itself?

MALACHI. Ptse! his blowing a horn would give me no trouble, if it didn't come to the ears of the agent who might take a notion to rise the rent in us for draining the quarry field.

PETER (*harshly*). 'Tisn't talking I am against the act of

blowing a horn, but 'tisn't for the good of Widow Casey he threw down his spade and went off on his canter. But 'tis the obstinate villainy inside in his stomach made him go blowing out of that horn, and it's a sign to me, if I wanted another sign, that he'll be a thorough blackguard. He is a painted blackguard, I'm saying, Malachi Cantillon.

MALACHI. Time for you be tired of saying it, my gay man, and you at it for six months.

PETER. It is tired I am of saying it, but I'm telling there is going to be a sudden stop put to the badgering between myself and Eugene. All of my name were big-spirited decent farmers that never done a mean or underhand act, and there was never a blackguard in my clan to match the sons I reared. But no blackguard will remain in my house to shame me before the world, and before the week is out Eugene will get the cost for a distant place.

ELLEN. 'Tis hard and unjust you are to Eugene that never went raking after bad-charactered women like Tim or Mike. And he is no moonlighter if he praises them itself. A hundred times worse was Luke before the notion came to you to chase him beyond the seas.

MALACHI. Let him pack him off, let him pack him off, but 'tis me that's disgraced after taking the account of match-making to the Driscolls! Ashamed of my life I'll be to put my snout outside the door for a month!

PETER (*advancing to* MALACHI). You took the account of a match! Ah, that I may never get a day's good of yourself and your zeal! The devil break your bones, what pinched you to skelp away at the glint of dawn?

MALACHI. This is my thanks for doing what I was told, and yourself after saying to me to take the account the time you were going to bed last night.

PETER. Isn't it half ravelling I was and we talking foolish?

Oh, I wished last night was back again! But the devil is done now and you are the cause of it, Malachi Cantillon. I'd nearly twist your neck!

[EUGENE GUERIN *and* TOM DRISCOLL *come over stile.*

EUGENE (*blows horn*). Isn't it wonderful music comes out of it and it only a cow's horn! Wonderful music when the right national heart is in a man for rising the tune! Isn't it rousing it is! Often in the evening time and I alone by myself, didn't it seem to me like a cry from the heart of Dark Rosaleen herself when the sound of the horn would come to me lonesome booming over hills and vales from beyond in rack-rented Carrignavar. [*Blows.*

TOM (*laughing*). Eugene, you're the dickens painted and your father prancing!

EUGENE. Then let him prance, for it's a grand day's work for Ireland this horn is after doing, and it calling to her children from far and near to do battle against those devils from hell, the police and bailiffs. [PETER *laughs sardonically.*

TOM. We had a grand day surely, Peter Guerin, and don't be talking! The people were there in hundreds, and pebbles flying like sixty! The peelers were savage, but I'm thinking Sergeant Curtin has a pain in his head from the riser of a stone he got in the ear from Andy Sofine.

EUGENE (*blows*). A glorious day for Ireland!

TOM (*laughing*). A bigger shout went up when Barton the bailiff got a kettle of boiling water down his neck from Kate Horan and he starting to work with the battering-ram. Oh, 'twas great sport, and hadn't we the band of Lyre itself that played the Caseys out in the finish and will play them in again in six months' time, maybe.

EUGENE (*blows*). A glorious day it was, and to hell with the enemies of Ireland!

TOM (*laughing*). It's a wonderful national man you are,

Eugene! The people is all talking of him, Peter Guerin. They hardly believed 'twas him at first blowing the horn, and he galloping over the fences like a cracked man! Then "Sound to you, Eugene Guerin," they said, "sound to you, Eugene. A better man than Luke he'll be itself," they said, and they cheering. (*Laughs.*) I'm thinking, Peter, he won't leave a trace of the bad name on the Cantillons, and 'tis a popular man he'll make of you even if you're against the moonlighters itself, for the people will only be thinking of the time yourself and my Uncle Martin were big friends and Fenians in the year '67.

EUGENE. Fenians in '67 surely. But 'twasn't your Uncle Martin but my father became a rentwarner in '77, Tom Driscoll.

PETER. Is it you that's daring to allude to that?

EUGENE. It is daring I am to allude to it and the way you're making little of the grand thoughts rising in me, yourself bulging with pride out of your high principles. But I am thinking you lost the high principles the time you took the rentwarnership, and the principles that are lost can be found no more. (*Band is heard passing on road at top of garden playing "God save Ireland." EUGENE rushes up garden and gets on top of stile, waving his hat.*) It's the national band of Lyre! Cheers for the national men of Lyre! Cheers for the national men of Lyre!

[*Sound of voices cheering in return while band keeps on playing. Getting off ditch and singing to the air.*

God save Ireland, cried the heroes,
God save Ireland, cried they all—

EUGENE *and* TOM (*together*)—

And whether upon the scaffold high,
Or in the battlefield we die—
Sure no matter when for Erin dear we fall!

TOM. Going home I must be now. The mother will be mournful pondering where am I since dawn.

[*Going towards left. The Angelus rings.* PETER *and* MALACHI *take off their hats, and they, with Ellen, commence to mumble some prayers.*

EUGENE. The bell is ringing and let us be starting for Glountane. 'Twill take us to reach it the time the moon is rising above the heights of Derk.

TOM (*laughing*). Don't be alluding to Glountane, Eugene ! Sure, I must show myself to herself and gobble a couple of bites, for 'tis famished I am, faith.

EUGENE. 'Tisn't hungry I am, for it's thinking I am of our glorious meeting with the friends of Dark Rosaleen. But I'll go to your house and we can start together, Tom Driscoll.

PETER (*catching* EUGENE). What's taking you to Glountane, the place where the moonlighters do be gathering to in the night ? (*Shoves* EUGENE *away.*) No, 'tisn't you I'll be asking, but Tom Driscoll, an honest boy that wouldn't tell a lie. (*To* TOM.) Before God, now, is it to be sworn in is taking you to the lonesome glen ?

TOM (*laughing*). That I may be dead and damned if I am, Peter Guerin ! Well, you're the crackedest man !

[EUGENE *and* TOM *go out at right.*

PETER (*walking slowly to left. Roughly*). Take that seed back into the house, Ellen Cantillon ! (*Turns half round.*) Blackguards ! Blackguards ! Isn't it against blackguarding I always was, Malachi Cantillon, and isn't it a straight man I am myself, though maybe it's a foolish man I am in my time. Foolish in my time surely, but thoughts do come to me that no man knows, and curious notions, and maybe there's times I see a longer way than them that's wise in their generation and has their eyes in kippens that nothing can

surpass and they up to every dodge and trick of the world. And I hope to God you won't regret your part in this business, Malachi Cantillon. [*Goes out at left.*

ELLEN. What is he saying, Malachi?

MALACHI (*shrugging his shoulders*). He don't know what he's saying. He made a good guess at the swearing-in surely, but it's laughing to myself I was and the faith he put in the word of Tom Driscoll. He told no lie indeed, for it's my belief the same Tom is in the moonlighters for twelve months. I have my eye on Tom. But there is one thing clear to me now, Eugene is surely going to be sworn in a moonlighter.

ELLEN. We couldn't have better luck and my last hope is gone.

MALACHI (*goes up garden*). I'll be in the lonesome glen too for that swearing-in, but I'll be there unbeknownst, Ellen Cantillon. Whispers I heard of bad work brewing, and maybe I'll know to-night if Eugene is to be in it. Our Eugene is going astray, but I'll know all when the moon is above the woods of Derk. [*Getting up stile.*

ELLEN. He is going astray entirely.

MALACHI. He is going astray entirely. I was thinking 'twas only a little spurt had come over him through means of his rupture with Breeda Carmody, for hundreds go shaping one way or another to rise thoughts in a female they'd be fond of, or to grig her maybe. But 'twas too ready he agreed to marry Maura Driscoll, and now I see 'twas only a farmer's fancy he has for Breeda. 'Tis the fever of the agitation has caught him in the finish, and where 'twill land him God alone can tell. [*Goes over stile.*

CURTAIN.

ACT II

SCENE.—*A lonely part of the glen.* MALACHI *comes out from bush and looks about him. He sees* ELLEN *entering cautiously from right.*

MALACHI. Well, the devil isn't the master of a female in the line of curiosity! Is it mad you were to come clattering after me, or what the dickens has pinched you at all?

ELLEN. Sure, isn't it chasing after Eileen I am, she to make for the glen thinking maybe the moonlighters would murder you, or maybe 'tis some notion she has of putting the fear of God into Eugene by the power of her faith and prayers, and the grand vocation rising in her for the holy nuns of mercy. No wonder if it's anxious she is about you whatever, Malachi, you doting on her, and always saying she'll have the gold when your day is over.

MALACHI. God forbid 'tisn't after losing herself she is in the cross and darksome country!

ELLEN. She went out of my view in the finish, and I after keeping my eye on her all on by the woods of Graigue, through the plain of Coumpane, and I to nearly overtake her in the big turnip garden below Pats Vicky's house. But in the brown bogs of Shrone she left me far behind, she skipping and hopping and I floundering and flopping and sinking up to my knees in the sousy quagmires, and when I got on the solid land and I blowing and panting like a sukky calf 'tis blinked

entirely I was by Eileen, and she going like a bird over the gap in Roger Shea's bounds ditch.

MALACHI. Didn't you call after her and screech?

ELLEN. How could I call and I in one shiver at the thought of being caught by the moonlighters? Isn't it striving to make no noise I was in dread I'd be handled and thrown down the cliff of Graigue, rolling over rocks and sharp stumps and every misfortune till I'd reach the bottom to die like a beast and I bleeding like a pig? I only said "pish-wish" after her like you would to a cat.

MALACHI. Her little heart will burst if her faith don't save her. Worse than moonlighters itself would be the peelers. For the devil is ugly if he is as ugly as a peeler rising out of a gripe, and he sick and sore from watching for moonlighters and the sour porter dying away in his stomach. Whist! there are two coming — it's Eugene and Tom! Hide, will you!

[*Shoves her in behind bush.* EUGENE *and* TOM *come in from left.*

TOM. 'Tis here we meet, Eugene. We do be drilled along that path, and out the glen we march and up the long field where the old crab-tree is in the corner. 'Tis there we makes the wheel-about. Often we give ten rounds of that field itself, for the Captain is death on drilling, and he always alluding to us as soldiers.

EUGENE. Is this the spot you were sworn in?

TOM. Beside the holly bush. 'Twas in the month of January, and I won't forget the way the night came down, rain fleeping from the heavens like you'd pour it out of a skillet. Glory! 'twas the biggest soaking and perishing I ever got, Eugene.

EUGENE. Is it the elements were troubling you in that glorious hour? Isn't it thinking you were of Granuaile—

of what she was in times gone by and the splendour that would come to her again surely in another day?

TOM. God forgive me, Eugene, I had no fine thoughts like that at all! 'Twas more chance than purpose brought me and I to ramble here with Jamesie Quirke, a servant boy of Harty's. 'Twas after playing a goose in cards we were and I had a share of porter taken. In course Jamesie was a moonlighter for years.

EUGENE. 'Tis mistaken I am and I always thinking you a national man.

TOM (*laughing*). Sure, what am I but a national man, Eugene?

EUGENE. Disappointed I am, Tom Driscoll. Disappointed I am and the finest things in my mind. You'd put down a man's heart. It's cold you are, and maybe your heart isn't in the glorious work at all. Now I remember that big sigh you gave and we passing Luke Carmody's gate. Tell me, Tom Driscoll, is it thinking you are of renayging the cause?

TOM (*laughing*). I am thinking of no such thing, Eugene! (*Sadly.*) Sure, 'twas of Breeda Carmody I was thinking when I let that sigh, but I was shy of telling you my trouble and you still fond of her maybe; though 'tis no ill-will you have to me because she took that sudden fancy for me, Eugene.

EUGENE. The thoughts of Breeda are far from me now. But wherefore should you be troubled? In a few days' time won't you have her chained by the power of the Church, and her coaxing eye will dare go stray-ways no more?

TOM. 'Twasn't a doubt of her drew that terrible sigh from me, Eugene, but a sudden thing that pierced me to the very heart itself—a thought that it would be a woful tragedy if any danger overtook me to prevent myself and Breeda having the loving time together we were thinking we'd have.

EUGENE. Wasn't that a cowardly thought to come in a rousing time?

TOM. I couldn't help it. Sure, 'twas a foolish thought, for a man is as safe in the moonlighters as out of them. And if the choice fell on a man to do a bad deed itself, 'tisn't him might be hung at all but some one as free of the crime as Jesus Christ himself, if he hadn't his alibi correct or was about the vicinity. The peelers don't care a devil but to make a case; the judge don't give a whack but to choke you for an example, and a jury of Cork Scotchmen would swing the nation on circumstantial evidence.

EUGENE (*angrily*). Don't be talking of swinging and choking the night that is in it, Tom Driscoll!

TOM. Sure, 'tis only alluding I am; but there is a deal a man might have to do he wouldn't think he'd have to do and he going to join the moonlighters.

EUGENE. Is it thinking to coward me you are, Tom Driscoll? 'Tis a shame for you; 'tis a shame for you, I'm saying!

TOM (*laughing*). 'Tis only talking I am, and don't be wild, Eugene. If a man had luck the choice might never fall on him to commit a crime. It didn't fall on myself yet, thank God! There is a noise coming through the brambles. It could be the lads, Eugene, for the moon is shining through the black trees of Derk.

EUGENE (*turning and looking out left*). There's forms moving. They are coming towards us. They are men.

TOM. 'Tis the Captain himself that's first. I warrant all cowardly thoughts will leave me when he is to the fore, Eugene, for 'tis into an auger hole I'd go when he'd be putting the eyes through me and he mournful always. Ah! it's a rousing way our Captain has, Eugene, and he a wonderful hero surely.

[*Enter* SYNAN *from right, followed by* MORISHEEN LUCY, JAMESIE QUIRKE, MICHAELEEN COSDEE, *and other moonlighters.*

SYNAN. Now we are all together, boys of Meenanaar! Is there a stranger amongst us? Is that a stranger I see in the brown caubeen?

TOM (*coming forward*). No stranger, Captain, but a neighbour, and the most raging national man ever walked the banks of Galey river—Eugene Guerin, that has come to be ordained.

SYNAN (*putting his arm out lengthways and holding some bauble between his fingers*). Then, Eugene Guerin, kiss the Cause! (EUGENE *kisses bauble.*) Now take him, men, to the holly bush and swear him in a soldier in the Army of the Night.

EUGENE (*as he moves along with moonlighters*). Proud I am to join the boys of Meenanaar, the friends of Dark Rosaleen! Great is their deeds and great is their glory! great is the fame that's out of them through all the world wide!

[*Murmurs of applause from moonlighters.*

SYNAN (*speaking in a low tone to* TOM *and those near him, while the other moonlighters in a muttering way are administering the oath to* EUGENE). Grand is our work surely, but small the glory that has ever come to us since we first rose up under another name a long while ago. But 'tisn't glory is troubling us, for there's a fierce thing makes us go out battling in the night—a fierce thing since the first of us rose up out of the ground that is scorched with the salt tears of the generations and with the tears of blood of the generations, and the churchyards full of the helpless innocent that were wronged and murdered by tyrants.

[*Moonlighters and* EUGENE *rise up.*

MOONLIGHTERS. We have sworn him in, Captain dear!

SYNAN (*taking a step forward and shaking hands with*

EUGENE). A stranger you were a while ago, and a stranger you were yet and you talking like a man of Erin. But now it's a stranger you are no more, Eugene Guerin, and it's the same as if you were with us a thousand years. Soon you will be put through your facings, Eugene Guerin, and the mettle of your bravery will be known. To-morrow night you will repair, at the hour of seven o'clock, to Morgan Driscoll's inch. From there we start to make our attack on the Great House for guns. (*Wheels about.*) Let every man be in the inch prepared and ready, waiting for his marching orders at the hour of seven o'clock.

MOONLIGHTERS. We will surely, Captain dear!

SYNAN. There was never a time we were so well armed and powerful, and victory is sure. We'll take the guns without a struggle maybe; but if we have a battle itself, 'tis time we made a dash and whispers going that we, the men of Meenanaar, are in dread to face the barricades, though we'd be as bold as brass in ourselves breaking into sooty cabins and the houses of the common farmers. There must be no shame on the boys of Meenanaar, for we're no cowards surely.

QUIRKE (*staggers about in a drunken way*). By Jaycus, there was never a coward in Meenanaar!

SYNAN. Arising out of the attack on the Great House I have a little private affair to settle of my own. 'Tisn't my wish to keep it secret from my loyal band, but there are things a man do be shy to allude to, and if I told what I'm going to do I'd have to refer to what I don't want to refer. Believe me, I'll manage it nice and handy, without bother, but I'll pitch on two to stand by me at the Great House for fear I'd make some slip. 'Tis only a trifle, and they won't renayge me. I choose Tom Driscoll and Eugene Guerin.

TOM (*striding forward*). 'Tisn't alone a trifle I'd do for you,

Captain; through the fires of hell I'd go itself if you but gave the word.

EUGENE. Here's likewise, Captain Synan. Griping I am to do a man's part in the work of glory.

COSDEE. 'Tis a curious thing, Captain, and I won't go behind your back to say it—'tis a curious thing that 'tis Eugene Guerin and Tom Driscoll, the two last to join our society, should be chosen for confidential duty. It's putting a slight, I'm saying, on more of us that's tried and tested and proved loyal men.

A MOONLIGHTER. Don't be rising your voice against the Captain, Michaeleen Cosdee! Isn't it after excusing himself he is and saying 'tis only a trifle he wants done by the recruits? Don't be rising your voice against the Captain. If you're long joined itself no shining deed gives you the claim to speak.

COSDEE. You're a liar that's talking, for there isn't in Meenanaar a man more fierce than Michaeleen Cosdee!

SYNAN. Be silent, Cosdee! No slight is meant for you, and no slight was ever meant for you, though 'tis often you do be growling and giving sour under-looks. No more of this now, for 'tis me, not you, that's Captain in Meenanaar. (*Making a swerve with his arm.*) Now for our marching exercise, boys, for all we'll arrange to-night is the attack on the Great House.

LUCY (*coming forward*). Captain Synan, I am no insubordinate man, but all here heard the report that Murt Pringle is to get possession to-morrow of my father's land, and it's disappointed I am to hear no word from you about the grabber. Weren't we always saying the day what man would take my father's land that day he would pay the bloody price?

QUIRKE (*staggering about*). We were, and, by Jaycus! let us draw the lots to see who'll be the happy man will have the sport of letting the light through that limb from the devil,

the grabber of the Lucys' land. To-morrow, by Jaycus, he'll be dead, and to-morrow, by Jaycus, he'll be damned!

SYNAN. Jamesie Quirke, 'tis me is Captain here, and 'tis me is to give the word if the lots are to be drawn. You're drunk, Jamesie Quirke, you're staving drunk, you clown, and it isn't your first time coming staving drunk to our meeting-place. You're no credit to Meenanaar; you're double paid with drink and money for every job you do, and there's no trust in the like of you that has your senses drownded for the seven days of the week.

JAMESIE. Isn't it in want of money I am, Captain, and what crime is there in taking coin and lush from the sympathisers? Don't hundreds do the same? I drinks a fearful lot surely, but, by damned! if I was swimming in booze from dawn till dark no enemy of the Cause would hear a syllable after Jamesie Quirke!

MOONLIGHTERS. No fear of Jamesie, Captain, he's loyal though he's a rake—sure, there was never an informer in the moonlighters.

MORISHEEN LUCY. Wherefore draw the lots at all? Isn't it after saying it I am a thousand times, 'tis me is the man should shoot the hound that grabs my father's land? Wherefore the drawing of the lots when there is a hearty volunteer?

SYNAN. Morisheen Lucy, our rules are that each man takes his chance in the draw, and you dare go against the rules while I am the Captain of the moonlighters! But we aren't sure of the grabber yet, and no lots are to be drawn to-night.

QUIRKE. By Jaycus, I'm sure of him! I have it from Tomaus Clobber that Murt Pringle is the man. He is to get possession to-morrow, I hear, but to-morrow, by Jaycus, he'll be dead, and to-morrow, by Jaycus, he'll be damned!

SYNAN. The land isn't grabbed yet, and again I say it, no lots are to be drawn to-night.

LUCY. That's queer entirely, Captain Synan.

QUIRKE. By Jaymony, Captain, if you weren't the man you are I'd say 'tis some feeling you have for Pringle of Patch.

SYNAN (*in a rage*). What are ye both saying? What are ye saying to me at all?

LUCY. Forgive me, Captain Synan; my temper that's working me and I so hopeful of having the matter of the grabber settled to-night.

QUIRKE (*weeping loudly*). Forgive me likewise, Captain, sure I don't know what am I saying, and I boozed, by James!

SYNAN. Maybe 'tis too hasty I am in myself, for 'tis that attack on the Great House I want to be talking about, to be telling the boys of Meenanaar to be working themselves up to it, till they'd be raging, half-maddened, frothing at the mouth itself—that's the way I want the boys of Meenanaar. (*Loud applause from moonlighters.*) And that's how I want you to be, Morisheen Lucy; but when our victory is won, if you're then impatient to do for the grabber before we have our regular meeting, I give you leave to break our rule, or any other hot volunteer that wants to send him to his home in hell. [*Further applause from moonlighters.*

LUCY. Grateful I am to you entirely, Captain Synan. Sure you couldn't but feel for me and that grabber in my mind, the same as there's something on your own mind you want done for yourself and you calling on Eugene Guerin and Tom Driscoll.

SYNAN. Something I want done for myself, this man has said. 'Tisn't designedly you spoke, Morisheen Lucy, but 'tis a piercing thing you have said to me surely. A long time I have been working in the Cause, and no man till now could say

I wanted something done for myself, or that I looked for gain out of what I done in this world or in the next, glory be to God! Many a gun I have taken and many a meadow I have spiked; many a threatening notice I have posted up in all parts of the parish and the police after my heels! But was it for myself I did all that? (*Loud negative shouts from moonlighters.*) Was it for myself I went jail for threatening would-be grabbers and the sympathisers of grabbers, landlords and emergencymen?

MOONLIGHTERS. No, Captain!

SYNAN. Was it for myself I went jail for saving the cattle of unfortunates from the hands of the police and bailiffs?

MOONLIGHTERS. No, Captain!

SYNAN (*swinging his arm about*). 'Twas this hand that sent grabber Curtin to his doom! 'Twas this hand that split the black heart in the tyrant Fesberry after it drawing him down off his black charger and he stepping the white road gay and proud that morning in July! 'Twas this hand that did what it did to Murt Horan, the unfortunate wretch, who was my bosom friend and schoolfellow a long time before! "And would you hurt me, Synan?" said he, and we in the lonesomest place with the moon shining in the frosty sky. "Pray to your God," I said. "Sure, you wouldn't injure me, Synan," said he; "sure, you wouldn't pull that trigger for the world," said he. "Pray to your God," I said. And again he was beginning to jabber, but . . . ! (*Making a sharp clap with his hands.*) A walk of seven miles through lonesome fields I had after doing it, boys of Meenanaar, and 'twasn't for myself I did it, Morisheen Lucy.

MOONLIGHTERS. 'Twas not, Captain!

SYNAN. The thing that I am going to do in the finish I wanted to do a long while ago if the opportunity came to me. But now I'm joyful surely, men of Meenanaar, that the chance

didn't come to me to do what I wanted to do a long while ago. For if it did, maybe I wouldn't be the man I came to be, with the fiercest hatred brewing in me was ever in a man against the tyrants. But now 'twon't signify when I have settled this little account of my own, though 'tis never quiet I'd sleep in the grave if it wasn't settled surely. I want no praise from no man, but 'tis another such as myself I'd like to name as Captain after me—a man with the same hatred, with the one thought in his head and he half mad with it, no doubt on him but wonders growing to him, and he savage labouring for the Cause. I wished I could name the man, for my hour is approaching, men of Meenanaar.

MOONLIGHTERS (*weeping*). Oh, Captain, 'tisn't thinking of death you are and you so young!

SYNAN. My age is twenty-five, but my end is drawing near. There is them has heard the banshee three times and she making for our cabin. Up the banks of the river she do be coming, the voice going in and out with every turn of the river, and it flowing crooked through the green inches. Don't I know 'tis me she's wanting and she always following the Synans? I am no shaky man, but I'm thinking I'll meet my doom in the attack on the Great House. But if I drop itself 'tis brave men I'll have about me in the heel, and brave men I'll leave behind me in Meenanaar. Turn about and march! It's the last time I'll be drilling ye out the glen maybe. Forward and march, men of Meenanaar! Out the glen ye go quick! March! March!

[*Moonlighters go out at right.* MALACHI *and* ELLEN *come from behind bushes.*

ELLEN. Mother of God, shield us! wasn't it a lucky thing the crazy Captain forbade the drawing of the lots? Peppering I was and my heart having every lep up into my mouth! 'Tis some consolation, Malachi, that the lots weren't drawn—a

little consolation, I mean, only the name of a consolation indeed.

MALACHI (*sardonically*). Why, then, it isn't even the name of a consolation itself; and isn't it planning I am this mortal minute how to put a stop to the attack on the Great House? I caution you to be silent if you don't want me to be massacreed and torn asunder limb from limb. Be silent, for I'm telling you it's a timorous thing I'm venturing; but if that attack comes off there will be holy murder and bloody war.

ELLEN. What foolish hope was in me, then, I thinking of only a few scrapes and skirmishes and the moonlighters in high conquering game?

MALACHI. 'Tis what themselves is thinking of maybe, and the great fun there is in blazing away at windows. But let the battle go how it will, Eugene and Tom have small notion 'tis they will have to murder Cook's nephew if the Captain misses him—the young gentleman that came home last night from the Indies, Ellen Cantillon. I know why the Captain was ashamed to talk of it before the seasoned moonlighters and chose the recruits: 'tis all on account of his sister.

ELLEN (*crooking her head and shoulders forward. In a low tone*). The Captain's sister Mage that had the bye-child with young Cook the time he seduced her long ago?

MALACHI (*sotto voce*). And what about that bad death she got in the heel drounded in the bogs and her black head frozen in a block of ice?

ELLEN (*loudly*). Holy murder and bloody war! Holy murder and bloody war!

MALACHI (*catching her*). Behind the bush with you again! They are coming back—in a gallop they are coming—it's the peelers is after them surely!

[MALACHI *and* ELLEN *hide behind bushes. Re-enter from right,* TOM DRISCOLL, COSDEE, LUCY, *and* QUIRKE.

QUIRKE. They're blinked, by damned! The devil carry me! I'll wager the dirty things didn't catch or cuff a single man of Meenanaar! But, Jaymony, 'twas a scruple we hadn't our guns!

TOM (*laughing*). Well, 'twas the suddennest thing! They had the Captain but for as smart as he took to the river. Lord, what little dread was on him to face the deep and it black and cold! But God or the devil wouldn't coward our Captain!

COSDEE. Where was the bravery and Synan the finest swimmer in Meenanaar? Maybe you'll say 'tis bravery made Eugene Guerin fly into a dyke of briars at the screech of "Peelers!" where he'll be surely nabbed and the peelers will put such fear of God into him that he'll inform against the boys of Meenanaar!

TOM (*laughing*). God help you, Michaeleen, the power of man couldn't make a turncoat of Eugene! He won't be caught, for the peelers never seen him in the rush, and I'll warrant he'll make his way out the gullet and over the bogs home.

COSDEE. If he isn't caught 'tisn't himself he need thank, and it's the gammy moonlighter he is that didn't pause and think where to run like the rest of us, but to bolt in disorder the way he did like a blind mad bull! And 'tis him our famous Captain chooses for special confidences, and maybe is thinking of naming him as leader after himself in Meenanaar!

LUCY (*as they go on towards left*). 'Tis thinking I am of what gave that warning screech of peelers! (EILEEN *comes in at right unperceived.*) 'Tisn't wrangling you should be,

Cosdee, on account of it, but grateful to whoever is watching over us. For it was the strangest screech. It came out of a bush—like a voice from the other world it was. And if they had the power, sure what wonder if the spirits of the dead would come to help us in our great uprising against the oppressors! [*They go out at left.*

EILEEN. 'Twas me screeched.

ELLEN. Misfortune again, Malachi. See how the something put her in the way of screeching; 'twouldn't be punishment enough for us to see him nabbed by peelers. Oh no, we must see him wallowing in holy murder and bloody war!

EILEEN. 'Twas the devil tempted me, then! There's great sorrow in me now. The grace of God is gone from me, for I can't repent; for if the chance of screeching came again to me I'd screech surely. I could never let the lads be caught by the peelers. [EUGENE *comes in from right.*

EUGENE (*pulling* MALACHI *by collar of coat*). I have you, you grey and grizzled eavesdropper! Spy of the world, I'll warm you for committing the sacrilege of listening to our plans for the glorious attack on the Great House! You shameless old badger, I'll leather you within an inch of your life!

ELLEN. We didn't hear a haporth, Eugene. Myself and Malachi are after straying into this quarter only on the hop of the venture of meeting Eileen returning from taking a message from the nuns to Miss Proctor—that old single dame beyond that gives her the flowers in style for the Quarant 'Ore.

EUGENE. Spying ye were, but 'tis you I blame for it, you grinning codger. (*Giving* MALACHI *a little slap.*) Take that now! [MALACHI'S *hat half falls off.*

MALACHI (*sourly*). Be careful with your tricks, I'm telling you! (EUGENE *gives him another slap; his hat falls off.* MALACHI *picks it up.*) Be careful again, I'm saying, with your nudging, Eugene Guerin!

EUGENE (*giving him another slap*). Amn't I careful entirely, aroo? [*Gives* MALACHI *a harder slap.*

MALACHI. Is it thinking you are of hurting me in earnest? Is it careless you are you might shorten my days by a mortal wound? Give me that stick now, and no more of your pinching and capering!

[*Makes a dart and snatches stick from* EUGENE, *shoving* EUGENE *back, who falls down near bushes.*

EILEEN (*running to* EUGENE). Oh, Eugene, don't let your temper rise! If Uncle Malachi heard your secrets itself, wouldn't it be the last thought in his head to tell the police?

EUGENE (*half rising*). I'll murder him with one welt of that big stone—that's what I'll do!

MALACHI (*advancing*). Don't attempt to lay a hand to that corrig! Old I am and wrinkled maybe, but, by the living God above me, no man will take my life while there is a stroke in this arm! There is a stroke in this old arm, an almighty stroke in this old arm, and I'll kill before I'm killed, Eugene Guerin!

EUGENE (*rises*). I'll murder him with a clout! I'll murder him with a clout!

EILEEN (*clinging to* EUGENE). For the love of God be merciful, Eugene!

ELLEN. Hold him, Eileen! Hold him, Eileen! Think of yourself, Eugene, and you mad with nationality! Would it be wishing to you if your uncle dropped down excited and he worn with the age?

EUGENE. I'll murder him! I'll murder him!

EILEEN. Come home, Eugene! Come home, Eugene!

[*Sings.*

O Paradise! O Paradise!
O how I long to see! etc.

EUGENE (*when* EILEEN *has finished singing verse*). I will go home then, Eileen. Be thankful for your skin to this child, Malachi Cantillon, and never again come spying after a national man of Ireland!

[*They go out at right. Before curtain falls* EILEEN *is heard singing the two last lines of verse.*

CURTAIN.

ACT III

SCENE.—*Interior of* PETER GUERIN'S *kitchen.* ELLEN *is sitting down at fire and poking it with tongs. Enter* MALACHI.

MALACHI. The information is given and the moonlighters are baulked. By this old Cook has his warning, likewise the Captain the anonymous writing telling him stay at home, for himself the night that's in it. 'Tis old Debby I chartered to deliver both the messages—the milkwoman at the Great House. Not without big expense, faith; indeed, I had to put my hand in my pocket and land her out my ten shillings and fippence.

ELLEN. Ten and fippence to a milkwoman! Isn't she the ferocious bloodsucker! Howbe, the money isn't squandered if it's the means of saving Eugene from holy murder and bloody war.

MALACHI. My only bother is some clatter I heard in the men's room of the Great House and I bargaining with Debby in the flagged passage. She said it was a cat, but, the Lord guard us! if it could be Teig Wren, the new servant-boy from Tralee! In sure, Teig, all unbeknownst to the quality as pays him, is a painted moonlighter entirely and wouldn't scruple to open the hall-door to the gentlemen from Meenanaar.

ELLEN. I doubt if it was a cat. I'll warrant we won't have so much luck if that new scapular Eileen put around your

neck and you going out the door this morning didn't work some miracle of mercy with our Heavenly Father above, praise be to His holy name—amen !

MALACHI. 'Tis the riskiest venture I ever drew on me surely. But don't be dreaming it was for Eugene I went endangering my four bones, a lad that was fit to singe the hair off my head in the glen but for the way I acted frightening him with the stick, and I letting on to be lepping with bravery and murder, though well knowing if it came to a who shall between us he could eat me alive, glory be to God !

ELLEN. 'Twas a good sign of him as ready as he softened, Malachi, under the power of the saintly poetry.

MALACHI. Isn't women fools ! I'm telling you the prayers and the singing only gave him the excuse to come off his big horse with dignity, but, believe you me, it's delighted I was yourself and Eileen gave him the excuse with the screeching. Oh, the proud swaggering boy ! Oh my ! what little scruple was on him to leave me shivering in a bruised cripple, all for my spying for his good, giving him the chance to vent the bad stuff was choking his gullet because he lepped into a scorth of briars in a sudden instead of showing himself off a flaming hero in the eyes of the men of Meenanaar.

ELLEN. Don't be harsh with him, Malachi, because of that little scuffle. He is fond of you, and when you're dead I'll warrant 'tis Eugene will have many a mass said for the benefit of your soul in purgatory.

MALACHI (*ironically*). He will, I'm thinking ! As little I expect from him as from his father, Peter Guerin, that can't have the second bottle of porter taken without alluding to me, insulting, as the model of a gombeen man ; though it wasn't too stiff I was with Peter the time I gave him up the farm with yourself and I in the last link with the wheezing and the bronchitis ; a man moreover I was the means of

shaping into a prosperous farmer by the power of the brain in my head.

ELLEN. Time will tell if Eugene don't be a good head to you in the heel of your days.

MALACHI. I'm telling you it's a big fool I am to be working wonders in this place for the benefit of one or either. Eugene will be grateful ! He will be like Peter the time I took all the trouble to wheedle him into taking the rentwarnership and he dragged, and all the trouble I took to keep him in it a few years itself, he chafing against it and ashamed ; meantime I had to be telling big lies to the agent that the reason he wouldn't attend eviction was because you were too national in yourself, moryah ! And when he flung it up in the finish, he starts cursing me for my zeal and my ingenuity, and he rearing again against the Cantillons. That's the way I do be thanked for all I ever done, no profit to myself, and no honour for me or the like of me among the people—an old single batchelor stuck in the corner.

ELLEN. Malachi, for God's sake ! sure Peter is Peter, but Eugene is Eugene.

MALACHI. A big fool I am, a damn sight a bigger fool than the like of you could comprehend ; and sore was I pondering on my foolishness and I sloping hither from the Great House. But this matchmaking over, never more will you catch Malachi Cantillon torment his old carcass by putting one foot across another for man, woman, or child. I'll call in by degrees all the money's due to me and put it safe in the bank. I'll go trading in a few dry heifers for myself, and I won't get up before ten o'clock a morning in the week.

ELLEN. We both want a rest, Malachi, and we out of the bunk every day these forty years what time the ducks let the first quack in the small drain outside the door. And I'll

sleep it out many a morning surely, in comfort for myself, if all goes well with poor Eugene.

[BIG WILLIAM *appears outside half-door.*

MALACHI (*turning round*). Is it you that's in it, Big William Cantillon ?

BIG WILLIAM (*fumbling with bolt*). Who the dickens would it be but me ? What the devil hold has this bolt at all ? (*Slips back bolt and bounds in.*) Malachi, 'tis me, not Pringle, must have the Lucys' land ! Hell to you that put me off taking it the time you did, you versed and cunning old fairy ! for now the land is gone from me if I don't have the money to send the landlord that's on the drag, and must get the ready cash the same as he got it by evicting the Horans for a half year's rent and not allowing them to sell their interest. I want a hundred pound !

MALACHI. Begone, Big William ! Is it coming here you are before the people, rising ructions, and maybe putting impediments to the marrying of Eugene ? Begone ! for there's them has sworn you'll fall the hour you grab the Lucys' land.

BIG WILLIAM (*making a noise with his fingers*). That much for all the moonlighters from here to Ballydehob while there's a revolver in my pocket and peelers at my heels !

ELLEN (*turns round from looking out window*). Begone, Big William Cantillon ! The matchmakers are moving near, and Eugene and Tom is talking to the girls near the sallies. Begone, or Eugene will lep the steeple !

BIG WILLIAM (*catching* MALACHI *by coat lapels*). Listen to me ! I must have that hundred pound ! God above ! if you knew the horrible fright came on me—coming from town —at the first glimpse I got of the big bush on the height that shows the Lucys' farm sloping away to the east. "Murt Pringle has taken it" rattled in my throat. I beat the horse to

a foaming sweat, and galloping like the devil for three miles I never drew bridle till I reached the boreen. Out of the car I lepped and across the bounds ditch, the eyes flying out of my head looking to see if Pringle was walking the farm. Down with me to the river half mad, and, Lord! when I saw the rich brown bank above the water and the soft green grass waving over the verge, I was fit to eat my fill of that lovely earth and that lovely grass, Malachi Cantillon.

MALACHI (*freeing himself*). You'd be as well employed talking to that stone wall as to me. Be off, I'm telling you!

BIG WILLIAM (*catching* MALACHI). Are you a brother at all, you gombeen hag? Look at the way I was screeching all night in my sleep, and I having every nightmare Pringle had the land. My son John is as bad. At break of day he lepped out in the middle of the floor: "Take that land, father," said he, "and don't be cowarded by no man." But I want a hundred pound!

MALACHI. You'll not get a hundred farthings!

BIG WILLIAM. I'll out in the field and roar! I'll start murder with the high clipper of nationality, Eugene!

ELLEN. You outrageous villain! Lend it to him, Malachi, lend him the hundred pound!

MALACHI. I'll not lend him the price of a box of matches.

BIG WILLIAM. You'll be well secured. Here's the note, my name to it, John's name to it, and I'll guarantee the transaction will be a secret, and the grabbing won't be public till after the marrying of Eugene. Will that do?

MALACHI. 'Twill not do.

BIG WILLIAM. Is it forcing me you are to go over the hills craving to Gombeen Roche, and giving him the interest? Mightn't you as well have the big interest?

MALACHI. How much interest ?

BIG WILLIAM. Big interest. (*Pause.*) Great interest. (*Pause.*) As big as you ask it, Malachi Cantillon.

MALACHI. The devil carry you ! here's the money ; and now away with you in the shelter of the ditches while I go down to them that's walking the land. [*Goes out.*

BIG WILLIAM (*going out*). Like the wind I came and like the wind I'll go. Depend on me not to be seen, though there's a thing swelling in my chest this moment makes me feel the size of an elephant. For, Christ above ! I'll have the Lucys' land. [*Goes out. Re-enter* MALACHI, *hurriedly.*

MALACHI. I'm betrayed to Captain Moonlight—there's Teig Wren sneaking away from the direction of Meenanaar, and 'tis Big William he seen itself turning the corner of the triangle. I'll be crucified if it isn't Eileen they'll massacree in the villainy of revenge. (*Going rapidly about kitchen.*) It's in a terrible fix I am entirely ; it's in a terrible fix I am entirely. [EILEEN *comes down from room.*

ELLEN. It had to be. In a terrible fix, and is there no help for it ?

MALACHI. No help, but let come what will. Many a slip I made and I a youngster sliding on the ice, but I never came once on my poll, though the cutest I ever seen would come on their poll soon or late. Many a slip I made since in my way of life and never came on my poll likewise, but I'm thinking I have come on my poll in the heel, Ellen Cantillon. [*Goes out.*

ELLEN. We're done tay, Eileen, and to have Malachi give way. Up in the room with you and be praying, and I'll be making a shape to be praying. Up in the room ; 'tis in no humour I am now to be parrying quizz-talk with these sporting females walking into us, Breeda Carmody and Maura Driscoll.

[ELLEN *and* EILEEN *go into room. Enter* BREEDA CARMODY *and* MAURA DRISCOLL.

BREEDA (*standing at threshold and looking out*). I declare, Maura Driscoll, they are going on again with their whispering and their capers. Isn't it a scandal the way they are grigging us with their mysteries? I wished . . . Did you cover what Eugene said the time himself and Tom drew back letting on to be lighting their pipes at the whitehorn?

MAURA (*sitting down*). I heard that laugh from Tom surely, and was it "Whisht, Eugene" he said, putting his hand over Eugene's mouth?

BREEDA. That was after. Didn't you hear Eugene's loud whisper about slipping away from the matchmaking at a certain hour, and about some two guns himself and Tom have hid in the bench of hay?

MAURA. I have a buzzing in my ear with a week.

BREEDA. They're like two thieves planning. They're clever if they aren't in earnest. (*Comes in and goes to window.*) We'll see if the four guns are here that Luke the moonlighter hid behind the shutter. Two is absent, Maura. (*Closes shutter.*) They must be up to some wonderful prank, surely. I'll put back the clock an hour for sport.

[*Takes clock and puts back hands.*

MAURA. I'd be chary of interfering with it, Breeda.

BREEDA. Why are they tormenting me with their mysteries? You'd remain mute under every abuse, you're so quiet and meek in yourself always, and it's a show the way you're in love. (*Puts down clock.*) Is it mournful you are again? I declare you're worse than your ma itself, for she keeps moving and gives her brooding vent in speech. You're always sighing and always melancholy. Times you nearly give me the peuk, for maybe 'tis me with all my capers will meet a right misfortune before my day is done.

MAURA. I'd be smiling if I knew what you were up to starting tricks with the lads ; but there's a dread in my heart you're thinking again of Eugene.

BREEDA (*musingly*). Eugene is turning out a gay man surely in the heel.

MAURA (*rising*). Tom is double as gay, Breeda. Stick to him now in the name of God, and leave me Eugene !

BREEDA. Be civil or I mightn't, for Tom isn't half the game he used to be.

MAURA. I never seen the match of you, a lively person, having such fancy for a man of game. Isn't it the like of me they do be saying that should be having that canter ; and there, I'd like my man to be sensible and sober and doing his work for himself ! In course I wouldn't object to his taking a couple of bottles extra when he'd be out at a fair.

BREEDA. And who said I had a grah for blue drunkards, Maura Driscoll ? Moreover half the game do be dead in the like of them. And big smokers don't have the speech. Still, a man that can't take a smoke and a drink for himself isn't the thing either, if he gabbles itself. Now, in my opinion, Dandy Tobin that wears the high collars was never a right man of game. He could surely give fool-talk to a barsmaid for the two longest hours a clock ever struck, but let him take one smoke and he was levelled in a heap as weak as a dishcloth—a green corpse and he retching out his lights and his livers !

MAURA. It's the way you don't know what you want, Breeda Carmody, in the shape of a man.

BREEDA. Maybe I don't, Mary saint-eye. If I did itself I'm thinking I'd search through the four corners of the globe for him and come back with but a Flemish account of his whereabouts.

MAURA. The Lord free your heart of its surfeit of fancies !

(*Enter* EUGENE *and* TOM *unperceived.*) I wished you'd be satisfied with Tom.

BREEDA. Wasn't I doting for months? For a while 'twas great sport. (*Sighs.*) I'm fond of him still, I suppose, in a way. Howbe, of late, moreover, when he's absent for a bit I'd be ashamed to tell the way I cool. And then I do be that disappointed and sour and discontented in myself I yawns and I yawns, I don't know . . .

[*Yawns.* TOM *catches her suddenly from behind.*

TOM. Is this what you're saying now after all that passed between us, Breeda Carmody? Is this what you're saying, you that swore that of all the fancies you ever had only one had a foundation in your heart?

BREEDA (*trying to free herself*). Let me go, Tom Driscoll. Let me go, will you!

TOM. No, till I shame you now. And wouldn't it be a fitting thing to shame you before the world for a versed false thing, and it less than four weeks itself since you were alluding to our crowning day the time you stood between the two gosedauns and we giving that look at one another? Was there lies in your heart and we talking of it? Was there lies in your heart and we in one word saying the heavens stopped to watch us in that hour, and we knowing the greatest miracle in the world; and was it false you were talking and we comparing ourselves to them that were not pure, and that the stars in the skies would only blacken at the sight of them?

BREEDA. Wasn't it joking I was with Maura now? Don't be taking notice of me—mustn't I be joking till the day I will go into my grave, Tom Driscoll?

MAURA. Isn't Tom smiling, Breeda? Isn't it funning he is, you fooleen? (TOM *goes and sits on stool and laughs.*) Now, wouldn't you say he was a man of game?

BREEDA (*angrily*). Isn't it the meanest thing the way he

went on? (*To* Tom.) For spite, 'tisn't to you but to Eugene I'll give a suck of the bullseye.

[*Takes sweet out of her mouth and passes it to* Eugene.

Maura. I'll be jealous, Eugene. I will, faith, if I don't get a suck of that sweet!

Eugene (*taking it out of his mouth and giving it to her*). Here it is, with compliments. I warrant 'twould take a share of Breeda's sweets now to turn my brain or a share of her coaxing glances. She had me once surely, the day she came over the strap, a corner of her bib in one eye, she weeping, moryah! and the other little eye dancing and lepping inside in her head.

Breeda (*facing him*). Aren't you big in yourself? 'Tis little would pinch me to give you one look that would make your heart go clouting like a clock!

Tom (*rising*). I must have the sweet, Maura. 'Twouldn't be a lucky thing if I hadn't the last suck out of it and it after coming out of Breeda's mouth.

Maura. You can't, Tom. God forgive me, it slipped down my throat unbeknownst!

Breeda. A bad sign if I was trusting to one bullseye. (*Takes sweet from pocket and gives it to* Tom.) Put that in your mouth and don't be troubling over small things—a habit would wear every screed of flesh down off your carcass in a manner that you wouldn't be the size of a wren in a week! Wouldn't I hate the sight of you with a sickly grey colour on your face and ugly bones pointing through your cheeks? We'll sit down for ourselves and we'll have a chat.

[Tom *and* Breeda *sit down on same chair.*

Maura. Wouldn't we do the same, Eugene?

[*They sit down. Then an awkward silence.*

Breeda. Where's all the talk gone?

EUGENE. Where's all your talk gone?

TOM. I'm drowsy.

BREEDA. I'll put my head on your shoulder and we'll let on to be asleep before the old men.

MAURA. We'll do the same, Eugene.

[*They seem to go to sleep.*

BREEDA (*rising, and going to* MAURA). Tom's asleep.

MAURA. Eugene is snoring.

BREEDA. The way they are they hadn't a wink last night, whatever they were after. Maybe you saw the look they gave at the clock and a look at each other like they'd be thinking they'd have time for a little doze for themselves? There'll be fun if they don't wake. Lord, here's the old men!

[*Runs and sits down by* TOM. *Enter* PETER GUERIN, MALACHI CANTILLON, LUKE CARMODY, *and* MORGAN DRISCOLL. ELLEN *and* EILEEN *come down from room.*

MALACHI. Four hundred and fifty would be but the miserable fortune to bring into this farm.

MORGAN. Wouldn't I freely give five hundred and fifty if it was there, Malachi Cantillon? Indeed, it puts me to the pin of my collar to make up the four hundred itself.

PETER. Isn't my word given that the match is made at four hundred, Morgan Driscoll? Don't be referring to the money again, Malachi Cantillon.

LUKE. Hear, hear! well it becomes Peter Guerin to act the man; well it becomes him not to be splitting parables over a trifle of fifty pound. To hell with it for dirty money! I wished we could do without it entirely.

MALACHI (*sardonically*). Ah, then, 'tis you have the natural hatred against the feel of a banknote in your fist, or that noise a gold sovereign makes, Luke Carmody.

MORGAN (*laughing loudly*). I declare to my God, the lads are asleep! And the women! [*Laughs again.*

MALACHI. Women is like cats; they sleeps when they like and they wakes when they like.

LUKE. A deal of knowledge you have of the way women sleeps, you old single badger of sixty!

MORGAN. In a sense I'd say Malachi has truth, Luke Carmody. Leastways I'd say women sleeps generally with one eye open, Luke Carmody. [*Laughs loudly.*

ELLEN. There's tormented women find it hard to close the one eye itself, Morgan Driscoll.

[*She gives them refreshments.*

LUKE (*taking a drink and looking at the sleepers*). Isn't it a heavy sleep is on them, glory be to God! There's no sleep but the sleep of youth, I'm saying.

MALACHI (*going to* EILEEN). Did they kiss opposite you?

LUKE. What harm would it do her if they did? Don't answer him, Eileen. Leave him dull of it for a sanctimonious old gombeen man. And they going to be married, I wouldn't begrudge them to be kissing while they could hold at it.

[*Sings.*

Ho ro, the countryman, the countryman, the countryman,
Ho ro, the countryman would keep . . .

MALACHI (*fiercely*). Will you stop? Is it bawdy songs you'd be singing before Eileen?

LUKE. What is Eileen but a woman if it comes to that?

MORGAN. I'd say Malachi is in order, Luke Carmody. I would say surely that a man shouldn't use bawdy expressions before a female, leastways before a female till she'd be falling a little into the age I'd say, Luke Carmody. (*Laughs loudly.*) Sing a suitable song, and we'll all sing a song to make a night of it. If I had another glass wouldn't I sing till morning as I often done before! [*Laughs again.*

LUKE. Chorus me. (*He sings part of "The Farmer's Boy." Chorus.* BREEDA *crosses floor and joins in the singing. While* LUKE *has been finishing verse* MORGAN *has been humming to himself.*) Is it something lonesome is troubling you?

MORGAN. I'm going to sing, faith. [*Sings.*

What will you do, love, when I am going,
With white sails flowing, the seas beyond, etc.

[*Falls back off stool laughing uproariously.* PETER *raises him and drags him on to middle of floor.*

PETER. 'Tis Colonel Burke's dream I'll be singing for you, Colonel Burke the Fenian. God be with him, and God be with all the men of '67!

ELLEN. 'Tis time you gave over shouting of that '67, Peter Guerin. You'd be fighting with your child, and you showing him a bad example every time you do be on the batter.

PETER. Don't be talking! But for a few, all were heroes and true patriots in the year '67. Come, Morgan Driscoll, we'll do the Fenian step, and I'll sing you that song a hero composed.

[*Sings, and marches up and down floor, holding* MORGAN'S *hand. Shouts heard outside.*

MALACHI. It's the moonlighters, God above!

PETER. The moonlighters?

TOM (*suddenly waking up*). The moonlighters, Eugene, the moonlighters, and we have missed our meeting!

[*Enter* SYNAN, QUIRKE, LUCY, COSDEE, *and other moonlighters, all armed.*

COSDEE. Take a peep at your chosen men now, Captain Synan! Courting they are, the jacky-the-boxes! Isn't it

Michaeleen Cosdee knew the miserable cowardly stuff was in their gizzards, though Michaeleen would get no hearing?

SYNAN. Ay, let me look at the traitors! Isn't it a terrible thing the like of them should be mingled with the men of Meenanaar? Eugene Guerin and Tom Driscoll, I brand you before the world as traitors to the Cause!

TOM (*rushing forward to* SYNAN). Sleep overcame me, and forgive me, Captain! I am no traitor, and I am ready for the fray!

SYNAN. Had you knowledge that Malachi Cantillon had informed on the men of Meenanaar but for a friend being handy that put the fear of God into his paid messenger, old Deb with the crooked eye?

TOM. No more than the dead do I know what Malachi done, and I'm thinking Eugene can swear the same.

SYNAN. I hear no word from Eugene Guerin. Eugene Guerin, are you ready and willing to face the guns of the Great House?

EUGENE (*taking a step forward*). I am surely, Captain Synan!

MAURA (*rising*). Is my brother Tom sufficient for you, Captain Moonlight? Take Tom and, for the love of God, leave me Eugene!

PETER (*going between* SYNAN *and* EUGENE. *He catches* EUGENE *and flings him back*). Scamp of the world, what'll I do to you? Scamp of the world, is it leaving my house you would be to go murdering innocent people sleeping in their beds? But—my disgrace!—you're a son of mine, and you'll not dare leave my house to-night while there's one puff of wind left in my body, so help me Christ Almighty!

JAMESIE (*raising stock of gun*). Say but the word, Captain, and, by Jaycus, there's a cake made of his skull!

PETER. Isn't it brave you talk when the peelers aren't

fornenst you, you raging assassin, with the whisky bulging in tears through your ugly red eyes and they flaming inside in your head. But soon the bravery will be cooled in you, and soon the tasby will be flat in you, and you going in a shivering coward to be choked by the hangman's rope. Go along, you naked scamp, and look for the grace of God! And leave my house, all of you—blackguards, refuse, and dirty murdering moonlighters, leave my house!

JAMESIE (*taking a step forward*). Another syllable against the Cause and, by Jaymony, that face is in snuff! Give me the word, Captain, for the love of Jesus itself!

LUCY (*facing* PETER). 'Tis me has a word to say to him first, with his comfortable times and his comfortable house and his good bed to lie on for himself. 'Tis he can be alluding to us as dirty murdering moonlighters, for it wasn't Peter Guerin or them belonging to him that were thrown out on the road in the depth of red raw winter to live or die under the frozen canopy of heaven! 'Tisn't he ever slept with five brothers on a mattress on a cold floor, they pulling the bit of blanket from one another, the cold going through them and the perishing breeze! 'Tisn't Peter Guerin had to be looking at a well-reared mother and she silent and grieving on a neighbour's hearth; and 'tisn't he saw a brother and two sisters go down into their graves from the want and the starvation! O God, be with Timothy and Bridge and Liz this hour! And (*slapping his chest*) here's the man has gone through all this suffering he'd be calling a dirty murdering moonlighter—a dirty murdering moonlighter, and my land going to be grabbed by Big William Cantillon, and that hound of hell will have the house I was born in and my very heart's blood between the mortar of its stones! (*Uttering a fiendish scream.*) Ah, if I could only have these fingers around the grabber's throat (*utters another scream*), around his throat

choking him, murdering him! Ah, wouldn't it be the handsome sight to see his face swelling red and blue, and the big eyeballs lepping out of the sockets! May Jesus send him in my way till I'll batter the dirty life out of him on the stones, to be screeching with joy and I dancing a jig on his dirty bloody corpse! [*Utters another scream.*

PETER. I am no friend to grabbers, but God forbid I'd have your mind to damn my immortal soul for a bit of land!

LUCY. I would, and forty souls! Christ, give me one five minutes of hot revenge, and down to the bottom of hell I'll cheerfully go to be damned for ever and ever!

PETER. Mad you are and deludered; mad ye all are and deludered!

SYNAN (*advancing*). Not mad nor deludered, but true friends of the Cause. 'Tis yourself is deludered, or long since a sign from me had left you by this without a sound bone in your carcass. (*Wheeling about.*) Enough is said, boys of Meenanaar; the recruits are not guilty; and there'll be evenings galore to give that wigging to the gombeen man. Let Peter Guerin, that calls us murderers, keep his son; and Morgan Driscoll, if you're unwilling your son should march with us, keep him likewise.

MORGAN. 'Tis going to be married he is, Morgan Synan.

TOM (*going and mingling with moonlighters at doorway*). The Captain wants me, father, and you shall not stand in the way of the Cause.

PETER. A notion has come to me, Captain of the Moonlighters. (*Pointing at* EUGENE.) If he wants to be a blackguard and murderer, 'tisn't in the power of man to change him. There he is in a heap; take him—take him, be damned to him, and let him be shot!

SYNAN. Keep him now; he shall not fight with the boys of Meenanaar, for our principles are as sound and as noble as

ever your principles were, Peter Guerin. Face about, boys! Be lively and sing! With jollification we go to our battle, Peter Guerin, as free-hearted and gay as yourself, and you singing the time we came in the door.

[*Moonlighters go out, marching and singing.*

LUKE (*rising*). They mightn't be good or they mightn't be gracious, but there's no denying, Peter Guerin, they are dashing men the boys of Meenanaar. (*Going towards entrance door.*) Sure, but for the moonlighters, where would ourselves and our children be at the mercy of landlords and grabbers, and if the Meenanaar men wallop old Cook they'll be nothing short of being the biggest heroes in the eyes of the people. (EUGENE *rises and goes rapidly into room.*) 'Tis home time, Morgan Driscoll.

MALACHI (*following* LUKE). And I wished you went home minus your apish remarks. 'Tisn't wicked enough Eugene is without your rising him to the moon.

[MALACHI *and* LUKE *go out arguing, followed by* MORGAN.

BREEDA (*to* MAURA, *rising*). My father is a sound man, but in points he is a deal a funnier man than yours, Maura Driscoll. (*Throwing her arms out wide.*) Glory! if there isn't tears running down out of her two eyes in a pure stream! (*Catching* MAURA.) I'll shake the dickens out of you, I will! Wouldn't you be the same as me—hearty in myself? Sure, I thinks it splendid game to see the guns flashing, the lads in high blood, and a rattle like of war all in the air.

[ELLEN *and* EUGENE *come down from room.*

ELLEN. He says he is going from us, Peter, going for good and all. (*Going on her knees.*) On my knees I beg of you to do one fatherly act, to humble yourself to Eugene and keep our child from straying away in a lone gosling through the fearsome intricacies of the world.

PETER. Whist, woman! isn't it a free and open world to a young man in health? He'll be welcome the time he thinks of returning if he has left his blackguarding behind him.

EUGENE (*from doorway*). The grass will be growing to your doorstep before I come back to you—you that has kept me from my part in the work that will be done to-night for the glory of the nation!

PETER (*half-ironically*). Isn't that satisfaction enough for you to know this glorious work will be done for the good of the nation?

EUGENE (*fiercely*). There is no more to be said between me and you; but I'll leave you a keepsake to bear me in mind when I am far from home—I leave you my curse!

[*Exit* EUGENE *followed by* EILEEN.

BREEDA (*going towards entrance door with* MAURA). Isn't he a bold devil and to curse his father! He is double as bold as Tom—he is pure game itself, though I admit 'twasn't manners of him not to wish you good-bye.

MAURA. Another thing is troubling me worse: there's a pain running from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot, Breeda Carmody, for it's remorseful I am why I told the Captain to take Tom.

BREEDA. It hadn't the black of your nail of an effect, so don't be snuffling, my lady sigh-all-day.

MAURA. If it hadn't an effect itself, I said to Captain Moonlight, said I, "Take Tom."

[*Exeunt* MAURA *and* BREEDA. *Re-enter* MALACHI.

MALACHI. There is a black form facing the river and it going through the high ferns in the inch. It couldn't be Eugene?

ELLEN. The identical man—wild and raging! And indeed, Malachi, 'tisn't a soft word that came out of Peter's mouth to cool him, but arguments and cross-talk; sure, he

didn't wish for better fun to get shut so nice and handy of poor innocent Eugene.

MALACHI (*fiercely, facing* PETER). I have something to say in the finishing of the story, Peter Guerin. Come now and talk to me, you man of capers! First and foremost get shut of the notion it was for Eugene's benefit I went matchmaking and endangering my four bones. 'Twas not, but a terror in my heart Eileen would lose her fortune if you took the fit to send to America for Luke and that damsel he picked up from the lower counties. You blush!—ah! wasn't it well I knew the thought was brewing in your brain, for you are fonder of Luke than all you ever reared; and big as your rage was against his moonlighting, 'tis you that keeps them in good order, snug and cosy in red flannel for themselves, the loaded guns he left behind the shutters. You banged him in your fury, but many a time you'd have sent for him but for the shame of going against your principles before the people. But you are thinking of sending for him in the heel, and answer me now, you man of capers!

PETER. I have done my duty by Eugene. Though he joined the moonlighters itself, I wouldn't have broken the match if he stayed. So help me, that was my intention, and it was doing far more than my duty by Eugene.

MALACHI. If it was, 'tis against the grain you were doing it.

PETER (*rising suddenly*). Then so much the greater should be my praise, Malachi Cantillon. (*Raising clenched fist over table.*) And now let me tell you straight out from the shoulder that it don't signify a pinch of snuff to me what you think, or what the people will think, or what the nation will think—so help my God, I'll send for Luke!

[*Bangs fist on table. Re-enter* EILEEN.

EILEEN. He has carried the gun with him over the river,

Eugene ! I seen him to pull it out of the reek of hay. He cocked it, and he put it to his shoulder, and he pointed and he gaged with it, and up and down he waved it, and to and fro and hither and over. I coughed, and he shoved the stock of it under his coat, and gave the most fearsome yell was ever heard and the most awful look was ever seen on the face of a Christian. " And now, who'll stop me on the path of glory," he screeched, " for I'll be the volunteer," said he, " I'll be the volunteer ! " A word wouldn't come out of my lips and they glued, for I frightened, mother. I frightened !

ELLEN (*clapping her hands*). Holy murder and bloody war—he's off to slaughter his uncle, Big William Cantillon !

CURTAIN.

ACT IV

SCENE.—*Interior of* PETER GUERIN'S *kitchen.* PETER *is sitting at fire. Enter* ELLEN.

ELLEN. There is a crick in my neck and pains in my two eyes from the way I am gazing and gaping towards the east. That way Eugene should be making his appearance, for he said in the letter he'd be coming through Inchibane—the place he tarried in for a while before his wanderings took him to the big city.

PETER (*sarcastically*). He'll be here in good time, I'll engage.

ELLEN. I hope the dusk won't overtake him on his journey, Peter.

PETER. If it does itself he hasn't forgotten the landmarks in the space of a twelvemonth. He'd make his way in a night as black as pitch, I warrant he would, and come in a fly as straight and as sure as a pigeon, Ellen Cantillon.

ELLEN. 'Twould be more cheery for him to be coming while the warm sun is shining in the sky, Peter. I coaxed the old reuk cow out on to the kiln-field in order that he'd have a view of her the minute he'd come over the brow. There she is lying now, and she chewing the cud for herself. And then he'd be seeing the little homely windows through the trees and the old pump outside the door.

PETER (*sarcastically as before*). He'll arrive in high glee, surely.

ELLEN. I wished, Peter, you had a warmer welcome in your heart before him, and I wished you'd wear a smile. If moonlighting thoughts are brewing in him still itself, it need never more enrage the two of ye to the point of blows, for isn't the organisation broken up, and the moonlighters all scattered from Meenanaar? All he can do for the future is talk.

PETER. He'll get his shake-hands, and he'll get his welcome. And better than either, won't he be getting the land?

ELLEN (*taking up teapot from hearth*). God in His justice willed he should have the farm, I'm thinking. 'Tis a scruple if he isn't in before the tea is too boiled. (*Pouring a little on saucer.*) Isn't it purple coming out of the spout, Peter? 'Tis like wine, and no wonder, for we never pay less than three and eightpence a pound. (*Puts teapot back on hearth and goes to table.*) I'll engage he'll like this butter, Peter. I didn't trust the girl to look after it, and 'twas myself that mixed the saffron and the peckle and the saltpetre. It's my intention to keep the baked goose and the punch for supper. In the making of that loaf there didn't go as much as a tint of milk, but the finest thick sour cream out of the tub. A plate of larded dough-nuts I have likewise for him, warm in the oven, very luscious and as brittle as ashes. And then there is that apple-pie.

PETER. There is some clatter out in the bane.

ELLEN (*in excitement, looking out window*). 'Tis Eugene—'tis not, 'tis Malachi!

[*Enter* MALACHI, *carrying a rusty gun.*

MALACHI. Eugene's carabine I'm after meeting with on the back of a furze ditch. Poking I was for porcupines and

I to hit up against it. I wouldn't praise my task to be clearing that rust off it, and it lying on an earthy place since the time he went away. The two charges are in it, for there's caps on the nipples; but, I'm thinking, if there is life in that powder still, 'tisn't one way it would fly if a man pulled the trigger, but might take a gallant notion to blow the shooter himself, body and sleeves, into eternity.

ELLEN. You never brought me a more welcome present, Malachi, for if it wasn't Eugene that massacreed Big William itself, it never left my head what he might be doing with that deadly carabine, though you would be consoling me and you saying if the real red murdering heart was in him 'tisn't his father could have stopped him, the time the Captain spoke to him in that voice, and he calling on him was he ready for the battle. Oh, my heart is bubbling at the sight of that woful engine, rusted and ruined and innocent of the precious blood of man!

PETER (*sharply*). Take the thing away, and be damned to it!

ELLEN. My heart is bubbling. We are in the heel of our days, and it must be the Lord in His mercy is thinking of relenting towards us and lifting from us the heavy hand that kept our noses to the ground and broke the melt in us so long. Flaming years have passed over our heads, and we have brought our scars out of the raging battling times, but there is a quietness all around, and now at last, maybe, there is opening before us a little while of joy. 'Tisn't me should be confident, Malachi, still, there is throbbing in my bosom the warmest hope we'll all rise contented at to-morrow's dawn, calm and rational for ourselves, without the pains of villainous torments darting through our eyeballs, and we blinking out at the sky of heaven and the fields so green.

PETER (*morosely, half-rising*). Take that thing away, I'm saying!

ELLEN. Hide it in some secluded place, Malachi ; the sight of it now might disturb Eugene.

MALACHI (*goes and places gun behind dresser*). 'Twill come in no one's way behind the dresser ; some poacher might be found to give a few shillings for it, or a dealer in old iron.

ELLEN. He will never discover it there ; and I'm thinking, Peter, 'twould be safer you'd burn them few lines you had from Luke giving you the refuse to come home to the land. For we must leave Eugene dull of it that you ever wrote for Luke. Some notion might come to him you had a natural hatred against himself, and then maybe 'tis the grief would swell in his bosom, and again he might leave us and for evermore.

PETER (*taking letter out of side coat-pocket*). 'Tis thin and seldom a letter ever came from Luke. And I'll not make ashes of this, though it's short and bitter surely. (*Reading letter.*) " No, father," says he in the finish, " 'tisn't in your power to bring me back the same as you drove me away. It's in a big city I am of a great free country, and it's a rousing life I lead. There is a future before me, I promise you, and it don't signify now whether you'd let me be a moonlighter or no ; though it's the same hatred I have against the landlords and the English, and the same love for the old sod I'll likely see no more." (*Folds up letter and puts it back in pocket.*) Wasn't I raving not to expect that answer, and the pride of the world in Luke ? It's the same answer I would make myself, I'm thinking. The letter will be secure enough in this pocket from the eyes of Eugene.

ELLEN (*turning round at door*). He is coming ! He made one spring off the ditch, and down the path-field he is coming ! He gives a toss with every step, and it's a gay and frisky appearance is on him, thank God ! (*Going towards hearth.*)

'Twould delight your heart to see him, and he whistling for himself, Malachi. I'll take up the dough-nuts.

MALACHI (*at door*). He is after meeting with Poet O'Rourke on the path, and I'd wager it's a flourishing account the same poet is now giving Eugene of all that took place during the time he was abroad.

ELLEN (*putting dough-nuts back in oven*). It's far in a way too soople that poet is with his tongue, varnishing into wonders what would happen at a fair. That we mightn't have an hour's luck of himself and his capers, they are lost and gone now, all the days I gave under heavy pondering how to deal out in dribs and drabs the newses to Eugene, making a common event of what was doleful, with phrases of Christianity ready that I picked out of that holy book, *The Key of Heaven*.

MALACHI. He is pointing towards the west. I hear the words. He is talking of the murder at the Great House; the way the Captain fell and Jamesie Quirke; how the brains of young Cook was scattered against the dry wall, and he striving to save his life by skelping out the back-yard. (*Short pause.*) There is a shout for you, and the poet lepping! Relating he is now of that battle between Big William and Morisheen Lucy. Listen to him describing the way they clawed one another like tigers and they going through the brambles; Big William growling and blowing, and Morisheen screeching like a born devil, a pure maniac, skinning his teeth, and steel flying out of his eyes at the thought Big William would overcome him.

ELLEN. The poet, he is now running down to the bushes!

MALACHI. Showing Eugene the spot where the struggle ended, when Morisheen got the knife at last into Big William's entrails, and all the blood was in him came splashing on the

green. The poet is laughing now : alluding he is surely to the death Martin Driscoll met with, Martin the Fenian, and he to fall out of a rail coming drunk from town. The poet is making a joke of the way Martin went off, roaring like a mad bull and damning the Queen of England.

ELLEN. He'll upset my child ; he'll upset Eugene. The rascal, he couldn't renayge referring to Tom's uncle itself, a regular devil. God forgive me for reflecting on the dead, but Martin Driscoll was a show with his nationality ! He was very bitter entirely, Martin was.

PETER. He was very steadfast.

MALACHI. They are like they would be whispering now. It might be the trouble that's on Tom Driscoll the poet is speaking of. He might be lowering the voice because of the big friends they were, Tom and Eugene.

ELLEN. That will pierce him the worst of all. 'Twill madden him to the moon itself that Michaeleen Cosdee has turned Queen's Evidence, and that Tom is on the run for the murder of Sylvester Cook. Now I am sorry, though before I was joyful, at what Eugene said in his letter of never hearing a word of the doings at home. It's coming on him too suddenly entirely, and it's in a tremble I'll be till I know which or whether what way he is at all.

MALACHI. It might be of Tom the poet is talking, and it mightn't. If it is or it isn't he won't forget Maura Driscoll has lost her senses, and he'll surely mention what happened to Eileen.

ELLEN. Don't be thinking of her at all, in the name of God ! or it's miserable-looking you would be in the face before Eugene. He'll be down-hearted, and we must be cheering him and soaping him. Sure, no one can tell you better than yourself how best to behave on every occasion, Malachi. Myself, I'll be as gay as a gadabout, and I'll rub my two

cheeks near the fire in a manner there will be a shine on them like a new shilling. [*Enter* LUKE CARMODY.

LUKE. God bless, Peter Guerin! 'Tisn't Luke Carmody the strong farmer you see now fornenst you, my honest man, but a crawling, sneaking beggar you see fornenst you. I never before went begging to no man, and it's queer and frizzled up I feel in myself entirely. What I'm alluding to—there's a big favour I'm going to ask of the people of this house—to wit, if they'd be agreeable to patch up that match between Breeda and Eugene. I'll get the refuse, I suppose?

MALACHI. And wouldn't it be the price of you, Luke Carmody? Ah, now my turn is come if I wanted to show my teeth.

LUKE (*going to door*). That settles it. No harm done. I can humble myself a share, but I'd rather die decent than humble myself too much. (*Turning round.*) Howbe, I'll make one remark before I wish good-bye: have no mercy on me if the thing I ask doesn't concern the happiness of Eugene.

ELLEN. Malachi, the happiness of Eugene! Why shouldn't we make the match, Mr. Carmody? I see no impediments. Breeda has turned against Tom; and if she hadn't itself, it's all overboard in that quarter and he a murderer.

LUKE. There is no more about Tom. 'Tisn't we haven't been sorely grieving for him destroyed in the bloom of his days, and 'tis a scruple to be thinking how soon the fine warm blood in him will be stopped so frightful sudden in his jugular by that knot, and that his bounding heart must burst inside in him all for to satisfy the law that has no mercy. We are sorry for him, but we can't renayge doing our duty by our daughter. Didn't Father Stebbin, one of the Holy Fathers,

say the time he was here last: "If you were sure the world was coming to an end to-morrow morning," said he, "you must do your duty the same as if you were to live for a thousand years," said he; "you must do your duty by your son and by your daughter," said he. Whatever happens to others, a man must do his duty by his own.

PETER. No man can point a finger at me as a sympathiser of moonlighters and murderers, still it's no praise I have on Breeda Carmody for the way she acted towards that deluded youth.

LUKE. Thinking him cowardly she is, seeing him sneaking along the hedges, she not knowing 'twas he that murdered Sylvester Cook and has good cause for his crawling. And 'tis only God knows the quandary I'm in with her, Peter Guerin. Seven specially selected young bucks I have brought to the house to her from far and near. "She might and she mightn't" was her canter from start to finish. Deludering me she was, not liking to give point-blank refusals and she seeing me anxious.

ELLEN. 'Tis Eugene she's fond of after all, and she's a good girl.

LUKE (*walking backwards and forwards, his hands under his coat-tails*). 'Tis only me knows the value of her, Ellen Cantillon. Clean and clever, she is all capability. You'd delight to see her go about her work, her heart in it; 'tisn't like streeleens striving to do one thing and they thinking why didn't they do another thing, sir singles hanging to their tails and dragging the puddle after them. If you paid a hundred pound for it you wouldn't find as much as a speck on the utensils after Breeda, and where she is you could eat your dinner off the floor. Whist! what was she but eleven years when I gave her up management and handling, but since

that hour there was never a man seen me walk down to Mass of a Sunday morning without my linen shirt on me starched and ironed and it as white as snow.

ELLEN. She is a darling housekeeper, and she'll do finely for Eugene.

LUKE. If the people here but knew her proper, they'd be wilder than myself to make the match. A pleasant thing to have the like of her near you in the last day settling the clothes about you in the bed. And 'tis she has feeling, though 'tisn't slobbery, or bulging out of her eyes and dribbling out of her mouth like it does be with things, and they all the time having a cold stone in the middle of their bosom, and nothing troubling them but their own dirty guts.

ELLEN. 'Tis the way she is, only too good, Mr. Carmody.

LUKE. If she has capers itself, she is more high and noble in her mind than the quality itself, for there isn't a trace in her of the dirty selfishness of big people, and she scorns the ways of the planning female. God forgive me, I'd have small pleasure without her in the hereafter even with the saints in glory itself! but I enjoys the thought of her sitting on a heavenly forum, and rising up in that fury of hers if a bar went wrong in the fine music they do be making in the high mansions of the Lord.

MALACHI (*rises and walks across floor. Impatiently*). She is good enough; she is good enough.

LUKE. She will get four hundred pound.

ELLEN. 'Tis fair enough, Peter.

PETER. Settle it between you.

LUKE. Malachi hasn't answered.

ELLEN. Take it as being clinched, Luke Carmody. Malachi won't say nay.

LUKE. I expect an answer if I have his goodwill. If he cares about making the match, 'tis strange he hasn't made

a remark about the money, if it isn't the way he is softened since the death of Eileen.

MALACHI (*turning round*). The figure is four hundred and fifty pound.

LUKE. I'll give it. And if they are willing, let us get them tied within the twenty-fours hours, in the name of God! for there is a chance Breeda mightn't hear till then that Tom is on the run. She might feel lonesome when it's told to her he is a murderer; it might move her to put off the marrying with Eugene for a while, and who could prophesy what changes would come in her in a week itself? Meanwhile away with me to sound her; and here is Eugene at the foot of the bane.

ELLEN. Talk to him and tell him all. 'Twill warm the heart in him if he has a fondness for her still. (LUKE *goes out.*) Now, Malachi, I can take up the dough-nuts. (*She takes up dough-nuts and places them on plate on table. Then she takes teapot from hearth. She pours tea into large cup. Puts two spoonfuls of sugar and milk into it. Stirs it noisily. Tastes it. Puts in more sugar, and again stirs it. Enter* EUGENE. ELLEN *embraces him.*) Eugene! (*He shakes hands with* MALACHI *and* PETER.) Now, Eugene, let not a syllable leave your mouth till you have eaten your fill. Here, fall to your wholesome lush! Come, fall to and stuff! no fear these eatables will pinch your lights or livers or twist a knot in your guts! [*He sits down.*

EUGENE (*eating*). An empty stomach needs small coaxing, mother dear. Famished I am and ravenous, and only in dread I'll make a beast of myself entirely.

ELLEN. O happy day, to see you letting the big bites down! O happy day, to see you feeding lively like the time you were a garsoon with your gobble and sup and skelp away! God bless you, darling boy, it's the same joyful

appearance is on you as was the time before you turned contrairy!

EUGENE. I'll be contrairy no more, I warrant you. That was a flight of another day, and it is over. And now I am happy and safe on this cool hearth that's all our own. (*To* PETER.) But 'tis to you, father, I am beholden that stopped me in my folly, and the way the bad work went on at the Great House. You that were the means of preventing me from doing some woful deed that would wither me in my prime, and even, if it wasn't discovered itself, would make my legs go bending under me all my days, and prison all the years that were before me.

ELLEN. The grace of God has fallen on Eugene!

EUGENE. In glee I was thinking how rejoiced you would be to see the change has come over me; and burning I was with impatience to tell of it, and I coming marching homewards through the rich meadows and level pastures of sweet Inchibane. In the big city came the inspiration, when all of a sudden it appeared to me the foolishest thing for a man to be lamenting for the glorious days of yore; for the people in them times had their day, and we must have our own.

ELLEN. Wasn't that a wonderful thought, Malachi?

MALACHI. A remarkable thought itself.

ELLEN. What would you be saying, Peter?

PETER. Malachi has said it.

EUGENE. Likewise did it seem to me the foolishest thing for a man to be grieving over the misfortunes of his country, such as the breakdown of the nation, the old traditions dying, and the people leaving it; tormenting himself to the brink of the grave over what had to be instead of enjoying himself in the flower of his youth.

ELLEN. Well, Malachi, isn't that almighty shrewd?

MALACHI. It couldn't be beat.

ELLEN. Peter?

PETER. As Malachi says.

EUGENE. I smiled at the thought of flightsome creatures running their necks into halters all careless in their fury; for at last I seen that glory was nothing short of the biggest sham, and one day of life under the warm sun of heaven worth a thousand years of fame and a man rotten in the grave.

ELLEN. Malachi, isn't that all sense?

MALACHI. It is the essence of wisdom.

ELLEN. Peter? [*He points at* MALACHI.

EUGENE. In course I will always be a national man, and 'tis no sympathy I have for an informer like Michaeleen Cosdee; but it is sufficient to give a shilling or a vote where requisite to help the cause. To go further, to endanger one's skin, is the height of lunacy, for a man is all the world to himself.

ELLEN. Ha-hah! Malachi, isn't that the essence of wisdom?

MALACHI. I believe you.

[*She turns and looks at* PETER, *but says nothing.*

EUGENE. 'Twas then the thoughts of home did come to me; I smothered thinking of the fresh blowing breezes. A shiver would come on me every time I'd see little wisps of clerks panting and losing the breath and they hopping along to their musty holes in the morning. The great majority you'd see bald before their time, little fairies as grey as the hills, and their cheeks the colour of the blossom of the furze.

ELLEN. The bad air and the confined life: thank God you came home in time!

EUGENE. Sick of the sight of them I was; and 'twas worse at night to be seeing all the fuzzy-wuzzy females on the prowl; and other things on the trot with jig-acting bucks chasing

after them. And 'twould turn your stomach all the miserable dirty slaves you'd come across with the black porter dribbling out of their mouths, and there is big dwellings has a stench coming out the open door would knock a thoroughbred stallion kicking at sixty yards.

ELLEN. 'Tis lucky you had the constitution and wasn't poisoned.

EUGENE. But one day I said to myself, away with me home! What am I here but a miserable blackberry in a canful, and away with me to my house and land! A big farmer I will be with my twenty cows and my pair of horses. I'll be a regular worker, but I'll enjoy myself at fair or market, or on a pattern day. A side-car I will drive. Two fat pigs I'll kill at Christmas, but I'll have fresh meat when it takes my fancy.

ELLEN. Malachi, he will make a fine farmer surely.

EUGENE. I said to myself, a good woman I will choose for a wife. With her I'll live in the healthy country way, and, with the help of God, my children will be about me in the heel, and I'll fall, like an oak tree, in the fulness of my years. Breeda is turning around to me, her father says; 'tis her I'll select, for the old fondness for her is come back to me as fresh as it was in its early bloom.

[*He drinks out of cup, places it back on table, and looks about him.*

ELLEN. We are all happy now. Malachi—Peter—aren't we all happy now? Peter? Malachi? (*She goes to* MALACHI.) Talk, Malachi, talk! 'Tisn't me can rise in tune with Eugene's rousing strain, I that has to go begging for speech the time I shouldn't go begging, and the Lord for some purpose having sent me into the world with a dull lump of a brain. Talk, Malachi! Will you talk!

[*Catches him by the arm.*

EUGENE. What change has come over him? And there

is some change in father, and even in yourself a change is visible to me.

ELLEN. 'Tis only in your eye it is, Eugene. No difference in us but whatever wrinkle is added to us or another grey hair, for the age is leaning on us, and the world is unjust.

EUGENE. The way it is, then: Malachi Cantillon has no welcome home for me.

ELLEN (*catching* EUGENE *by arm*). Whist, Eugene! wasn't it the warm shake-hands he gave you—wasn't delight beaming all over his visage and you walking in the door?

EUGENE. A forced welcome! His countenance shows it now, and he having failed to keep up the deception.

ELLEN. Better tell you the truth, Eugene: a sad turn that has mastered him and he after seeing a child's funeral passing on the road. Too lively it brought back to him some remembrance of Eileen.

EUGENE. Wronging him I am, then. (*Pause.*) But if I amn't itself, no strangeness in him shall daunt me now. Though it's like his selfishness to put a damper on me in my high joy, moreover after Eileen getting that happy death entirely. God rest her soul!

MALACHI. My fault surely. 'Tis true she got the happiest death—the happiest death I ever seen. Like the candle she went, and it shoving near the break of day. 'Twas on a frosty morning, too. "Don't be charging too much interest, Uncle Malachi," says she to me a while before. "And 'tis a national man I'd like you to be, but not to be committing crimes in course," says she, and she making a little frown. The creature! 'twas many a time she strove to make a national man of me, and she always in dread I was more than half a Tory.

EUGENE. We will be talking about her.

MALACHI. She was humorous even at the point of death,

and she whispering she'd make interest with Saint Peter to let me in before my time was due out of Purgatory. "I will surely make influence with him," says she, "to open for you the golden gates of Paradise—(*shaking his head*)—the golden gates of Paradise."

EUGENE. We'll have many a long talk about her, Malachi Cantillon, and I'll be consoling you when I'm settled down.

MALACHI (*bitterly*). That will be the time. (*In his usual tone.*) And I will be showing you the fine stone I put over her head. Big money I paid for it, and 'tis likely I was overcharged and I not knowing the value of them things. But there isn't a lovelier stone in the graveyard. "Sacred to the Memory of Eileen Guerin," is on it—"Sacred to the Memory of Eileen Guerin, who departed this life the 4th December 1889. Aged sixteen years. Sweet Jesus, have mercy." That's all that's on it.

EUGENE. Nice and respectable as it should be. A week won't pass before the two of us will take a ramble to the church.

MALACHI. We will. Many is the time I strolled there by myself in the heel of the day. I was never a shy man by night, but often I felt lonesome in the darkness and I looking about me at the graves. But at last I began to think of myself and my foolish dread, for sure it's the peacefullest place in the world, and there isn't a word out of them and they all there together, the quality and the commonality, the grabbers and them their land was grabbed, all that were tearing and murdering and they above the ground—not a word out of them, and not a whisper will come from them surely until the general judgment day.

ELLEN (*goes and catches* MALACHI *by arm*). Malachi! Whist, Malachi! is there head or tail to you in the heel of the hunt? Isn't it visible to you the trouble you're causing

poor Eugene, his lower lip hanging, and a frown between the two eyes in him? If I could believe it possible of you, 'tis half raving I would say you were, Malachi Cantillon.

MALACHI (*rising*). Let him not be minding me at all. But I am not ravelling yet, Ellen Cantillon, 'tisn't up to my time. I'll be ravelling when I'm doting. (*Going across floor.*) Then it's straying along the banks of the river I'll be, my lips moving in a sort of a muttering. And the youngsters will be pointing the finger at old Malachi Cantillon, alluding to the time he was the genius of a gombeen man. I'll be smiling to myself, for what does it signify in the heel whether a man is a genius or a fool? (*Sitting down near table.*) 'Twill be all the same in forty years—'twill be all the same in forty years.

[*Enter* MORGAN, PEG, *and* MAURA DRISCOLL, *the latter mad.*

MORGAN (*going to* EUGENE). We are disturbing you, Mr. Guerin, but a regiment of soldiers wouldn't prevent her walking hither when she heard you had come home. We must humour her, since it has pleased God to afflict her the way she is.

MAURA (*advancing to middle of floor*). God bless all here! God bless the man of the house, God bless the woman of the house, and God bless the cow that calved a Friday! Eugene! (*Gives a little laugh.*) Is it Eugene the patriot? Tom laughed at the way Eugene was rising national. "He will lose the senses," said Tom, "if Ireland don't be free." But I said to Tom—no, to the Captain I spoke—"Take Tom," I said, "take Tom." Ah! it's coming on me again, that pain like a stream of fire running from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot. [*Clasps her hands together.*

MORGAN (*to* MALACHI). She is wandering again, and that glaze is in her eye. You have your own sorrow, Malachi; you can feel for me. [*Sobs. They shake hands.*

MAURA (*slowly observing* EUGENE). They say Eugene came home. But I can't be deceived. It is an impostor that's here, and not Eugene. They swept him away to a mysterious place, and he'll return no more. 'Twas on May Eve he was bewitched by Breeda Carmody. A pair of high-heeled boots he wore, and she balancing herself on one leg on a big yellow flower in the marshy place near the well. Pale blue ribbons were in her dark brown hair, her two eyes beaming, and she blowing spells through her fingers. But a jaybird came and pecked her on the nose . . .

MORGAN (*takes her by arm*). Maura, give Eugene the hand. It is Eugene surely.

MAURA (*laughing loudly*). Remark the light boots! Father, you foolish man, that's the dancing master from Lyracumpane. At one bar of a whistle he'd spin about the floor like a top, sir. Once upon a time—'twas a bonefire night—I played a hornpipe for him on the concertina. I played "Off she ran with the leg of the duck," fol-de-rol-de-rol-de-rol-di-do! (*Dances a step. Pause.*) Eugene was the boy I was courting.

[*Sings a verse of "Shuil agrah," then laughs to the air.*

MORGAN. I hear the cows bellowing beyond. They are impatient, for it's milking time.

MAURA. Come away, in the name of God! The woman is cursed who neglects her cows, for cows is the props of farmers. (*He leads her to door.*) I said to the Captain, "Take Tom."

[MORGAN *leads her out. They both sing another verse of "Shuil agrah" as they disappear.*

PEG. She is his chiefest grief. Half-dazed from watching her, it don't seem to pierce him now the woful day that's fast and sure approaching when a black flag will fly above the jail (*clapping her hands*)—a black flag for my child!

ELLEN (*from doorway*). Morgan and Maura are waiting for

you, my good woman. They are looking back from this side of the glosha.

PEG. Why should they fly a black flag for my child? Why shouldn't they think of the long nights he repented of the red crime the Captain made him do, his head on my shoulder, and we sobbing and praying for mercy to the Saviour that died for us on the Cross, and for intercession to the immaculate Mother of God? Why shouldn't they think of the long months that no one knew of his crime but his own, when a step would bring the fearful whisper to his lips—"The police; is it the police?"

ELLEN. He isn't caught yet, and it isn't becoming of you to be flying in the face of God. Didn't the Holy Father warn the people 'twas a dangerous thing to be flying in the face of God? They are waiting for you at the glosha, Peg Driscoll.

PEG. 'Tis she delayed him going. But for her he might have been saved and across the seas before Cosdee turned informer. My curse on Breeda Carmody!

ELLEN (*catching her*). Oh no, you can't be cursing her now. Leastways you mustn't be cursing her here. Indeed, don't be cursing her here or there—there's a reason why you shouldn't.

PEG (*as if waking out of a sleep*). Is it cursing her I was? I cross it again, and I beg pardon of all here. Dazed I am myself to be cursing her, and it all foreshadowed that is coming to be. Dazed I am myself, for isn't the brain stopped from working inside in my head, and no more they do be coming to me now, the forebodings, the tokens, and the dreams. 'Tis the same as if the end of all things was at hand, and I neard around me the crumbling of the world. (*Kneels.*) Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners! (*Rises.*) Now and at the hour of death! (*Going out.*) Now and at the hour of death! [*Goes out.*

EUGENE. I wished they kept their lamentations at home. You'd think it's envying me they were my little pleasure; 'tis like as if a combination was got up to make me miserable. But they shall not make me miserable. Listen to me, Malachi Cantillon, you nor they shall not make me miserable.

ELLEN (*running in from doorway*). Here is Tom racing from the police. We have no hand in his coming, Eugene. We can't prevent them coming, Eugene.

EUGENE. Isn't it outrageous! Well, I'll be bothered from no more of them. I'll go and hide in the room, that's what I'll do. (TOM *passes window.*) Ah, he's in.

[TOM *comes in. He is wild-looking and breathing loudly.*

PETER. Are they after you, my poor fellow?

TOM. They are after me, and they are before me.

PETER. 'Tis no wonder you'd be the way you are, the terror of the world in your heart after being chased for a week.

TOM. I want a gun—one of Luke's guns. He wouldn't give me the refuse. The river is in flood and the police are on the bridge. There is a boat waiting for me at Glin, but the police are on the bridge. Let me have the gun, Peter Guerin! I must have the gun!

PETER (*rises and takes guns from behind shutter*). There is two of them and have your choice, and there is a box of fresh caps for you. But, my poor fellow, a rotten kippen would be as powerful in your hands as those old muzzle-loaders before the rifles of the police. 'Tis nearly mad you are, I'm thinking, and that's no wonder too.

TOM. 'Tisn't mad I am, for there is a chance of coming to close quarters with them by creeping along the hedge. And that great fear is gone from me, Peter Guerin. A long time it was in my heart, surely, a long time.

PETER (*in surprise*). And 'tisn't in dread you are at all now, you say?

TOM. I had a rousing dream. Lying in the heath I was, the warm sun shining down on me. And there appeared to me my Uncle Martin and he standing on the height. Scornful he was, and he pointing down at me. "A man of my breed afraid!" he said, and he laughed. "Look at me that never was afraid," he said. "Look at me that never was afraid." I awoke, and I jumped up with a great feeling rising within me. My heart opened, and I shouted to the skies that I would be afraid no more. Every bone stiffened in me, and I shouted that I would be afraid no more, and that I would repent no more. I had left my crime at the feet of Jesus Christ, and I would repent no more, for what I done I done as a soldier of Ireland. (*Going towards door.*) And if I'll stand in the dock itself 'tisn't a word of repentance will come through my lips, but it's a proud look I'll give them that are condemning me with villainy and impurity ranging through their hearts; and it's a bitter curse I will give them, a curse that will rise up as a defence for me ringing through the halls of the high heavens, even to the throne of the Almighty God Himself!

[*Goes out.*

PETER. Ah, my fine young man, to be riddled by the police—the black cowards that shot down the men of Ireland when myself and his Uncle Martin stood shoulder to shoulder in the Fenian days! Sure he was no blackguard, and deceived I was in my pride when I called them blackguards all the fine young men of these latter times. And will I let him—the nephew of my staunchest friend—be riddled by the police! (*Takes up gun.*) The dirty police! Ah, the dirty police!

[*Goes out.*

ELLEN. Peter! Peter! Peter going to be shot, and all my grand cookeries will be eat over his corpse! Peter going to

be murdered, Malachi! Peter that was so good to me! He was good to me if he was contrairy—didn't I always admit it? Think of the trouble he'd be in if I was hurt the time he'd be insulting the Cantillons in his liquor. "'Tisn't alluding to you I was at all," he'd say afterwards, he would indeed. He didn't close an eye for three weeks the time I was down with the fayver. [*Sound of firing outside.*

MALACHI. They have levelled him, ah, poor Tom! He is after falling like a sack, his arms going like the wings of a wounded bird. The Fenian is rising in his fury! Peter is taking aim! God! he has wounded the peeler that shot Tom! Ah, fodha deelin, he is down himself! Peter Guerin is down!

ELLEN (*in a choked voice*). Peter! Peter!

MALACHI. Is it out of the earth they have risen the crowds! They are taking the bodies up. They are bringing them both here, Tom as well as Peter. 'Tis the way they aren't dead entirely yet or they wouldn't be bringing in Tom. Though it would be a fitting thing to wake him here, his sister distracted and his mother near as bad.

ELLEN (*as before*). Peter! Peter!

EUGENE. Why will you be going on like that, mother? He rushed to his death in a spurt of folly, and who could stop him? Why will you be turning away—in God's name, look at me with the soft look of a mother, for I'm in torment too! (*Pause.*) Be just to me itself. You didn't expect me to do what father done, surely? The best of his time was spent, but think of what I'd have to lose by facing the police on a forlorn hope, losing all that lay before me—fifty or sixty years maybe of a bounding, vigorous life.

ELLEN. Peter! Peter!

EUGENE. Don't madden me. Turn to me in your grief. I will be a good head to you; I will be the best son to you was ever in the world.

MALACHI. When all is over and he is trenched we will be comforting her that way, Eugene. But now it's other words she wants to hear, and she thinking of the great soul that was in Peter Guerin. And, indeed, it's now I know, and maybe I knew it a long time, that all who rose up and fought for Ireland, howsoever they rose up and fought for Ireland, were the great-hearted and the kind. And 'tis like the red sun myself and Peter would be seeing rising above the blue hills and we going to the fairs on the frosty mornings, like the red sun rising up before us to the east chasing away the blue haze of the dawn, so will the fame of Peter rise grandly to the coming time, and it's a long day of glory will be on Peter surely.

[*Voices outside. Enter several bearing* PETER *and* TOM *on stretchers.*

A NEIGHBOUR. They aren't quite dead yet. Wouldn't some one get the book and read the litanies?

ANOTHER NEIGHBOUR. Give the book to Patcheen Croly, that answers Mass.

FIRST NEIGHBOUR. Be quick, neighbours, for the last throb of life is going. There is only a stir in Tom's little finger, and some movement in Peter's lips and his blood flowing fast. They are unconscious entirely. Read the litanies for these two that fell, Patcheen, the moonlighter and the Fenian man. Soon, neighbours, there will rise for them a litany was never heard in Ireland: from Carrihnavar to Carlevoye the cry will rise before the dawn of day, and from the plains of Lyre to the banks of Faley River.

PATCHEEN (*reads litany for the dying from Catholic prayer-book*).

MALACHI (*feeling the bodies with his hands*). They are cold.

NEIGHBOURS (*dropping quickly on their knees*). Oh, God be merciful to them! [BREEDA *comes in quickly.*

BREEDA (*looking at corpses*). He is gone now, and I'm too late to tell him my heart throbbed only for him, only for him all the time, and I deceiving myself in my folly and my pride. Even in this hour the hardness was in my heart the time he passed me with the gun, and I never knowing the trouble that was on him, or that he was going to his death. And I scorned the one appealing look he gave me. One appealing look he gave me and then walked on so cold and proud. My God! to let him go to his death with never a word from me to soften for him the bitter pain. Oh, Jesus! what put the film in my eyes? Oh, Jesus! what put the film in my eyes? Now let not a hair remain in this head! let prongs of fire come down from the heavens and scorch me to the ground! (*Puts her hand to her forehead.*) Oh, Jesus!

ELLEN. Peter! Peter!

BREEDA (*fiercely, suddenly facing* EUGENE). And is it you remained seeing them go to their doom—your father and your friend go to their doom in a golden day?

EUGENE (*gruffly*). Leave me alone now, Breeda Carmody! Leave me alone, I'm saying! New thoughts have come to me, and I am what the Lord God made me. Leave me alone now, and let no one talk to me at all.

ELLEN. Peter! Peter!

BREEDA (*turning away*). Ah, what signifies it now what any one did or didn't, since he is dead? But it is for him and the like of him that the flowers smile, and always smiled, in the green soil of Ireland. But he is dead. (*Goes to corpse.*) Tom to be dead! Oh, Tom! Oh, love of my heart, is it dead you are! is it dead! [*Throws herself on corpse.*

CURTAIN.

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